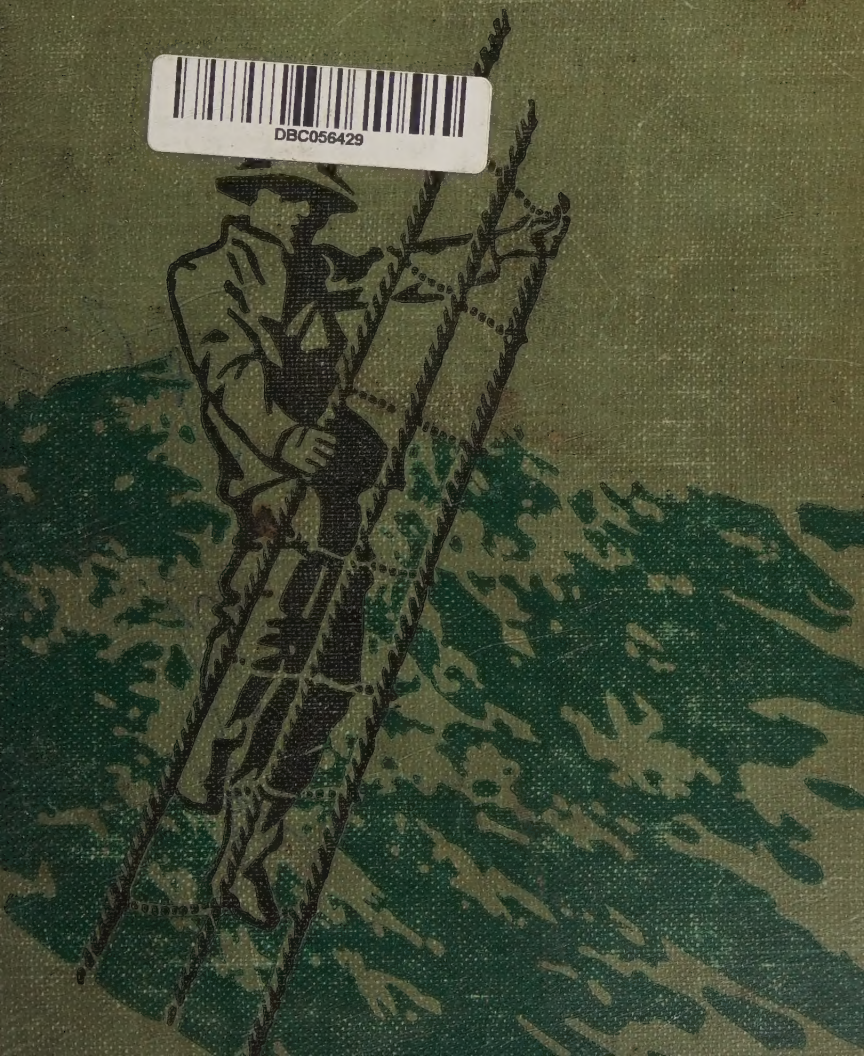


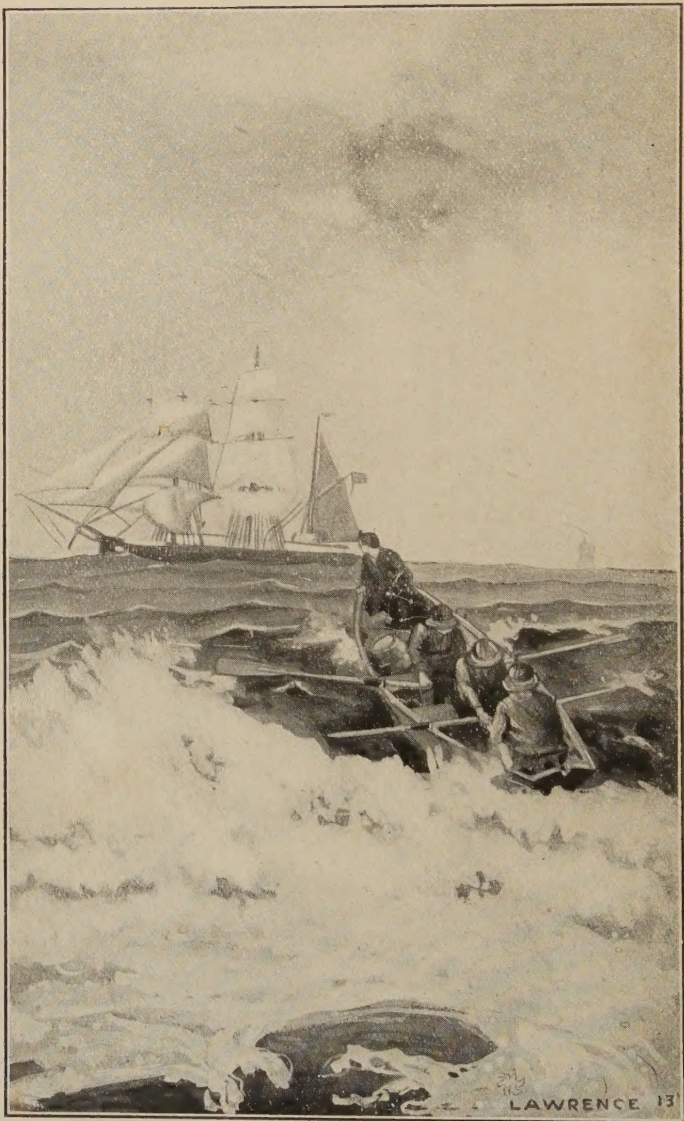
FROM SEA TO SEA







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"YOU WANT US TO LOSE THIS RACE, YOU SAWNEY!" HE EXCLAIMED.
(From Sea to Sea)

(Page 135)

From Sea to Sea

Or

Clint Webb's Cruise on the Windjammer

By

W. BERT FOSTER

Author of

**The Frozen Ship; or, Clint Webb Among the Sealers.
Swept Out to Sea; or, Clint Webb Among the
Whalers. The Ocean Express; or, Clint
Webb and the Sea Tramp.**



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From Sea to Sea

Or,

Clint Webb's Cruise on the Windjammer

CHAPTER I

In Which I Shield a Friend and Make an Enemy

The after port anchor had come inboard before I stepped over the rail of the Gullwing, and leaped to the deck. The starboard and port bowers were both catted and fished and the stay-fore-sail had filled to pay off her head.

The wind was blowing directly on shore; the current ran parallel with the land; there was no choice of direction in getting the big four-master under weigh, and she was headed into the stream.

A clarion voice shouted from the poop:

"Haul main-tack!

"Come aft with that sheet!

"Set jib and spanker! Look alive there!

"Mr. Gates! see if you can't get some action out of your watch!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" from the mate.

"Helm a-lee! hard a-lee!"

"Hard a-lee she is!" growled the helmsman, a great, hairy, two-fisted salt, with an enormous quid of tobacco in one cheek, a cast in his eye, and his blue shirt so wide open at the throat that we could catch a glimpse of a dashing looking mermaid, in blue and red, upon his chest.

"Set fore-sail! Be alive, there, Mr. Barney. Those men of yours act as stiff as Paddy's father—and him nine days dead!"

The stamping of the men on the deck as they hauled on the ropes, a confusion of cries from those in the tops, the squeal of the cables running over the drum, the coughing of the donkey-engine amidships by which the huge anchors had been started from the bottom of Valpariso roadstead, and the general bustle and running about, kept Thankful Polk—who had followed me aboard the big, four-stick schooner—and I right there by the rail, where we would be out of the way. Thankful gave me a sly glance, as he whispered:

"I reckon we've caught a Tartar in Cap'n Joe Bowditch—what?"

But I had noted the lines about the skipper's mouth and the wrinkles at the corners of his quick, gray eyes. Those lines and wrinkles had not been graved in the old sea-captain's face by any long-standing grouch. Captain Bowditch

was a man who liked his joke; and even his voice as he bawled orders from the quarter had a tang of good-nature to it that was not to be mistaken.

"I reckon we'll get along all right with him, if we play the game straight," I observed to my chum, and turned then to wave my cap to Cap'n Hi Rogers, of the whaling bark *Scarboro*, who was now being rowed back to his own ship after leaving us to the tender mercies of Cap'n Bowditch.

"By hickey!" exclaimed the boy from Georgia, glancing now along the deck, "ain't she a monster? Looks a mile from the wheel to the break of the fo'castle."

It was the largest sailing vessel I had ever been aboard of myself. The *Scarboro* was a good sized bark, but as we crossed her stern we could look down upon the whaler's deck and wave our hats to the friendly crew that had been so kind to us. Only a single scowling face was raised to ours as the *Gullwing* swept on, a creamy wave breaking either side of her sharp bow. This face belonged to my cousin, Paul Downes, who scowled at me and shook his fist. But I merely smiled back at him. I thought that—at length—I could afford to laugh at my cousin's threats. I was bound straight for home

aboard the Gullwing; he had eighteen months, or more, to serve aboard the whaling bark.

Seeing that both the captain and the mates were too busy just then to bother with us, Thank and I strolled forward. It was a long, long deck—and the boards were as white as stone and water could make them. There was some litter about just now, of course; but from the look of the whole ship I made up my mind right then and there that if Captain Bowditch was a martinet in anything, it was in the line of neatness and order. The slush tub beside the galley door was freshly painted and had a tight cover; there was no open swill bucket to gather flies; the cook's wiping towels had been boiled out and were now hung upon a patent drying rack fastened to the house, and were as white and clean as the wash of a New England housewife. Every bit of brightwork shone and where paint was needed it had been newly put on with no niggard hand. As the sails were broke out and spread to catch the light wind, many of them were white-new, while those that were patched had been overboard for a good sousing before being bent on again. Oh, the Gullwing was a smart ship, with a smart skipper, and a smart crew; one could appraise these facts with half an eye.

"Makes you think you ought to have wiped your feet on the mat before stepping in, eh?" chuckled Thank. "I bet we got to a place at last, Sharp, where we're bound to work. That old feller with the whiskers up there could spot a fly-speck on the flying jib-boom. I wonder he don't have brass cuspidors setting 'round for the deck-watch!"

Compared with the frowzy old vessels, captained and manned by foreigners, that make American ports, this American ship, American skippered, and American manned, was a lady's parlor. "She's a beauty," I said. "We may work for our pay—whatever it is to be—but thank's be 'tis no sealing craft. The stench of the old Gypsy Girl will never be out of my nostrils."

We stood about for a few minutes longer, trying to keep out of the way of the busy crew; but one husky, red faced fellow came sliding down the backstays and landed square on Thank's head and shoulders, pitching him to the deck.

"Get out o' the way, you two young sawneys!" growled this fellow. "Don't you know enough to keep out from under foot?"

Thank had picked himself up quickly and turned with his usual good-natured grin. It

was hard for anybody to pick a quarrel with Thankful Polk.

"My law-dee, Mister!" he exclaimed. "Is that the way you us'ally come from aloft? Lucky I was right here to cushion ye, eh?"

The red faced fellow, without a word, swung at him with his hard fist doubled. I was a pretty sturdy fellow myself, with more weight than my chum, and I saw no reason for letting him receive that blow when interference was so easy. I stepped in and the bully crashed against my shoulder, his blow never reaching Thank. Nor did he hurt me, either. His collision with my shoulder threw him off his balance and he sprawled upon the deck, striking his head hard. He rolled over and blinked up at me for half a minute, too stunned to realize what had happened to him.

The encounter was seen by half a dozen of the men, but none of the officers spied us. The spectators laughed as though they hugely enjoyed the discomfiture of the bully.

"Sarves ye right, Bob Promise," muttered one of the A. B.s; "I bet ye got more than ye bargained for in that youngster."

"Caught a Tartar, eh, Bob?" scoffed another man.

The fellow on the deck "came to" then, and

sprang up with every apparent intention of attacking me. I had shielded my chum, but it was plain that I had made an enemy.

"I'll teach ye, ye young swab!" Bob ejaculated, and started for me.

But the others interfered. Several hustled the bully back.

"None o' that, Bob Promise!" exclaimed the first speaker. "We'll have the old man down here in a second."

"I'll break that feller's neck!" cried Bob.

"I dunno whether ye will or not—in a stand up fight," drawled another of his shipmates. "He looks like he could take care of himself."

I had involuntarily fallen into an attitude of self-defense. That is where I had the advantage of Thank; I knew something about boxing, and although the bully was heavier and older than I, it was pretty certain that he had no science. At any rate I wasn't going to let him think I was afraid of him.

"You wait!" growled Bob Promise. "You stand up to me in the watch below, and I'll eat you alive."

I had an idea that if he did I should disagree with his stomach badly; but I did not say this. I don't think I am naturally a quarrelsome fellow, if I am impulsive. Nor did I wish to get in

bad with the captain and officers of the ship by being mixed up in a fight.

"Oh, pshaw!" I said, mildly. "I don't want to fight you, Mister. Thank didn't intentionally get in your way, and I didn't mean——"

"You struck me, you white livered——"

"I didn't," I denied. "You ran against me."

"Don't you give me no back talk," snarled the fellow, but looking out watchfully for the officers now.

"Don't be mad," I said, with a smile. "I'm sorry if I hurt you——"

I guess that wasn't a wise thing to say, although I did not mean to heap fuel on the flames of his wrath. He gave me a black look as he turned away, muttering:

"Wait till I git you a-tween decks, my lad. I'll do for you!"

Thank and I looked at each other, and I guess my countenance expressed all the chagrin I felt, for my chum did not smile, as usual.

"You butted in for me, Sharp," he said, gloomily, "and now that big bruiser will beat you up, as sure as shooting."

CHAPTER II

In Which I Relate My History and Stand Up to a Bully

A fine introduction to my readers! That is the way I look at it. It does seem to me, looking back upon the last few years of my life, that my impetuosity has forever been getting me into unpleasant predicaments. Perhaps if I wasn't such a husky fellow for my age, and had not learned to use my fists to defend myself, I should not have "buted in," as Thankful Polk said, and so laid myself open to a beating at the hands of Bob Promise, the bully of the Gullwing's fo'castle.

A quarrel with my cousin, Paul Downes, on a certain September evening more than a year and a half before, had resulted in a serious change in my life and in a series of adventures which no sensible fellow could ever have desired. For all those months I had been separated from my home, and from my mother who was a widow and needed me, and at this particular time when I had come aboard the Gullwing, my principal

wish and hope was to get back to my home, and that as quickly as possible. That the reader may better understand my situation I must briefly recount my history up to this hour.

Something more than fifteen years previous my father, Dr. Webb, of Bolderhead, Massachusetts, while fishing from a dory off-shore was lost overboard and his body was never recovered. This tragedy occurred three weeks after the death of my maternal grandfather, Mr. Darrington, who had objected to my mother's marriage to Dr. Webb, and who had left his large estate in trust for my mother and myself, but so tied up that we could never benefit by a penny of it unless we separated from Dr. Webb, or in case of my father's death. Dr. Webb had never been a money-making man—not even a successful man as the world looks upon success—and he was in financial difficulties at the time of his fatal fishing trip.

Considering these circumstances, ill-natured gossip said that Dr. Webb had committed suicide. I was but two years old at the time and before I had grown to the years of understanding, this story had been smothered by time; I never should have heard the story I believe had it not been for my cousin, Paul Downes.

Mr. Chester Downes had married my mother's

older sister, and that match had pleased Mr. Darringford little better than the marriage of his younger daughter. But Aunt Alice had died previous to grandfather's own decease, so Mr. Downes and Paul had received but a very small part of the Darringford estate. I know now that Chester Downes had attached himself like a leech to my weak and easily influenced mother, and had it not been for Lawyer Hounsdict, who was co-trustee with her, my uncle would long since have completely controlled my own and my mother's property.

Chester Downes and his son, who was only a few months older than myself, had done their best to alienate my mother from me as I grew older; but the quarrel between Paul and myself, mentioned above, had brought matters to a crisis, and I believed that I had gotten the Downeses out of the house for good and all. Fearing that Paul would try to "get square" with me by harming my sloop, the Wavecrest, I slept aboard that craft to guard her. At the beginning of the September gale Paul sneaked out of the sloop in the night, nailed me into the cabin, and cut her moorings. I was blown out to sea and was rescued by the whaling bark, *Scarboro*, just beginning a three-years' voyage to the South Seas.

I was enabled to send home letters by a mail-boat, but was forced to remain with the Scarborough until she reached Buenos Ayres. The story of an old boatsteerer, Tom Anderly by name, had revived in my mind the mystery of my poor father's disappearance. Tom had been one of the crew of a coasting schooner which had rescued a man swimming in the sea on a foggy day off Bolderhead Neck, at the time—as near as I could figure—when my father was reported drowned. This man had called himself Carver and had left the coasting vessel at New York after having borrowed two dollars from Tom. Years afterward a letter had reached Tom from this Carver, enclosing the borrowed money, and postmarked Santiago, Chile. The details of the boatsteerer's story made me believe that the man Carver was Dr. Webb, who had deserted my mother and myself for the obvious reason that, as long as he remained with us, we could not benefit from grandfather's estate.

While ashore at Buenos Ayres I was accosted by a queer old Yankee named Adoniram Tugg, master and owner of the schooner Sea Spell, but whose principal business was the netting of wild animals for animal dealers. He called me "Professor Vose," not having seen my face, and explained that my voice and build were exactly

like a partner of his whom he knew by that name. The character of this Professor Vose, as described by Captain Tugg, as well as other details, led me to believe that he was the same man whom the boatsteerer aboard the Scarboro had known as Jim Carver, and the possibility of the man being my father took hold of my imagination so strongly that I shipped on the Sea Spell for Tugg's headquarters, located some miles up a river emptying into the Straits of Magellan.

But when we reached the animal catcher's headquarters we found the shacks and cages destroyed and it was Tugg's belief that his partner—the mysterious man I had come so far to see—had been killed by the natives. Making my way to Punta Arenas, to take a steamship for home, feeling that my impulsiveness had delayed my return to my mother unnecessarily, I fell in again with the Scarboro.

To my surprise I found aboard of her, under the name of "Bodfish," my cousin, Paul Downes. Fearing punishment for cutting my sloop adrift, when his crime became known, Paul had run away from home and had worked his way as far as Buenos Ayres on a Bayne Line Steamship. There Captain Rogers of the whaling bark had found him in a crimp's place and had bailed him

out and taken him aboard the Scarboro. Paul didn't like his job, and demanded that I pay his fare home on the steamship, but I believed that a few months' experience with the whalers would do my cousin no harm, and should have refused his demand even had I had money enough for both our fares. The details of these adventures are related in full in the first volume of this series, entitled, "Swept Out to Sea; or, Clint Webb Among the Whalers."

Because I refused to aid Paul he threatened again to "get square," and he certainly made good his threat. I was to remain but two nights at Punta Arenas and had already paid my passage as far as Buenos Ayres on the Dundee Castle; but Paul got in with some men from the sealing steamer, Gypsy Girl, and they shanghaied me aboard, together with a lad from Georgia, Thankful Polk by name, who had tried to help me. Our adventures with the sealers, and our finding of the whaleship Firebrand frozen in the ice and deserted by her crew after her cargo of oil was complete, is related in number two of the series, entitled, "The Frozen Ship; or, Clint Webb Among the Sealers."

During those adventures I learned that Adoniram Tugg's partner, Professor Vose, escaped death at the hands of the Patagonians,

had joined forces with the animal catcher again, and in the Sea Spell they likewise had sought and found the frozen ship and her valuable cargo. Professor Vose boarded the abandoned ship and remained by her when the Sea Spell lost most of her spars and top-hamper and Tugg was obliged to beat into port to be refitted. Meanwhile, from the deck of the Gypsy Girl, I saw the vast field of ice and bergs in which the Firebrand was frozen break up in a gale; was horrified by the overwhelming of the frozen ship, and had the evidence of my own eyes that, whether the mysterious man in whom I was so greatly interested was merely Vose, Jim Carver, or my own father, he had sunk with the Firebrand under the avalanche of ice.

Later the captain of the Gypsy Girl, a Russ named Sergius, and Thankful Polk and I were lost from the sealing steamer and are picked up by the Scarboro which was on her way to Valpariso to refit after the gales she had suffered on the South Pacific whaling grounds. Captain Rogers, knowing my exceeding anxiety to return home, got a chance for Thank and I to work our passage on the Gullwing, which was just setting sail from Valpariso as the Scarboro arrived at that port.

And here we were on the deck of the hand-

some schooner, homeward bound; but before I had been here half an hour, it seemed, my ill-luck had followed me. I was enmeshed in a quarrel with the bully of the fo'castle, and could look forward to suffering a most finished trouncing when the sails were all set, the deck cleared, and the captain's watch was piped below.

"I've got a good mind to give one of the mates warning," muttered Thank, in my ear, as the bully went grumbling away at some call to duty by the dapper little second mate, whom I already judged to be Mr. Barney.

"Don't you dare!" I admonished. "That's no way to start. We'd have all the men down on us, then. And we don't know how many weeks we may have to sail with them aboard of this windjammer."

When they began to clear up the litter made by the work of getting under weigh, Thank and I saw where we could lend a hand, and we did so. We learned, by talking with the men, that the Gullwing was shorthanded, and that is why Captain Bowditch, shrewd old Down East skipper as he was, had so willingly given two rugged boys, with some knowledge of seamanship, their passage home. Two men had deserted at Honolulu, and another had to be taken ashore to the hospital at Valpariso.

The ship, we learned, was well found, and the men gave the officers a good name. Most of the crew had been with her more than this one trip. She was owned by the Baltimore firm of Barney, Blakesley & Knight, and her run had been out from her home port, touching at Buenos Ayres, at Valpariso and thence on to Honolulu and from there to Manila. On her return voyage she made Honolulu again, Valpariso, and now hoped to not drop her anchor until she reached the Virginia Capes.

It was the captain's watch that was short and we were turned over to Mr. Barney, the smart young second mate. He was a natty, five-foot-nothing man, whom, if he had voted once, that was as much as he'd ever done! But the men jumped when he spoke to them, and he had a blue eye that went right through you and Thank declared—made the links of your vertebrae loosen.

Meanwhile the Gullwing began to travel. Unless one has stood upon the deck of a great sailing ship, and looked up into the sky full of sails that spread above her, it is hard to realize how fast such a craft can travel through the sea under a fair wind. Many a seaworthy steamship would have been glad to make the speed that the Gullwing did right then, with but a

fairly cheerful breeze. She made a long tack to seaward and then a short leg back, and in that time the Valpariso roadstead was below the horizon and the outline of the Chilean coast was but a faint, gray haze from the deck.

We went below, leaving the mate's watch to finish the job. "Now for it," I thought, for Bully Bob had kept his eye on me most of the time, and he crowded down the stairs behind me when I entered the well-lighted and clean fo'castle of the four-stick schooner. I expected he might try to take me foul; for I knew what sort of fighters these deep-sea ruffians were. As a whole the crew of the schooner seemed much above the average; but I believed Bob Promise needed a good thrashing and I wished with all my heart that I were able to give it to him.

But if I could keep him off—make him fight with his fists alone—I believed I at least might put up so good a fight that the other men would interfere when they considered Bob had given me my lesson. I hated the thought of being knocked down and stamped on, or kicked about the fo'castle floor. I had seen two of the men fight aboard the Gypsy Girl and a more brutal exhibition I never hope to witness.

So I kept my eye on Bob, as he watched me,

and drew off my coat and tightened my belt the moment I got below.

"Getting ready for that beating are you?" he demanded, with an evil smile.

"I hope you won't insist," I said. "But if I've got to take it, I suppose I must. All I have to say, is, that I hope you other men will see fair play."

"You can lay to that, younker," declared the big fellow who had held the wheel. He was an old man, but as powerful as a gorilla. "Give 'em room, boys, and don't interfere."

Scarcely had he spoken when the bully made for me. His intention was, quite evidently, to catch me around the waist, pinion my arms, and throw me. But I determined to be caught by no such wrestler's trick. The ship was sailing on an even keel and I was light of foot. Just before the bully reached me I stepped aside and drove my right fist with all my might into his neck as he passed me.

Goodness! but he went down with a crash. Big as he was I had fairly lifted him from his feet. The men roared with delight, and slapped their thighs and each other's backs. I could see that they were going to enjoy this set-to if I lasted any length of time against my antagonist.

"Hold on!" I cried, before Bob Promise had

managed to pick himself up, and believing that my first blow had won me the sympathy of the majority. "This man has all the advantage of weight and age over me. If he'll stand up and fight clean with his fists, I'll do my best to meet him. But I won't stand for rough work, or clinches. He'll best me in a minute, wrestling.'

"The boy speaks true," declared the hairy man. "And I tell you what, mates. It ain't clear in my mind what the fight's about, or who's in the wrong. But the lad shall have his way. If you try to grab him, or use your feet. Bob, I'll pull you off him with my own two hands and break you in two! Mark that, now."

"Hurrah!" cried the irrepressible Thank. "Go to it, Sharp! I believe you can win out."

CHAPTER III

In Which the Bubble of My Conceit Is Pricked

Now this is no place to report the details of a fight of this character. It is all well and good for a boy to learn to box; it is one of the cleanest sports there is. It teaches one to be quick of eye and foot, inculcates courage, gives even a naturally timid person confidence, and aids wind and muscle. But the game should be played only with soft gloves—never with bare fists.

Maybe once or twice in the average boy's life will he need the knowledge gained in the gymnasium to save himself from a beating. I think now I should have sidestepped this trouble with Bob Promise, and could have done so with no loss of honor or self-respect.

But as I saw how lubberly the fellow was, and how clumsy he was on his feet, I was fired with the conceit that I had a chance to hold my own in the contest. And so I did.

I passed my watch to Thank and claimed two-minute rounds; he acted as timekeeper while

the gorilla man was referee. We fought altogether five rounds, and during that time my antagonist only managed to reach me half a dozen times, and only once did he knock me to the deck.

I was pretty fresh at the end of this time, while Bob was blowing like a porpoise, I had closed one of his eyes, and his face was bleeding where my knuckles had cut him deeply. During the last round I noticed that the men had kept mighty quiet, and as the big fellow stepped in between us when Thank announced the end of the round, I saw Mr. Barney, the second mate, standing behind me.

"I reckon that's enough, boys," said the little second mate, good-naturedly enough. "They're not matched by the rules you are following. This young fellow will soon have Bob groggy. The boy's got all the science and Bob has no show."

This was putting it in a light that vexed me. I had thought *I* was the one to earn sympathy, not the bully.

"Why," I complained, "he pitched on me for nothing. And he outweighs me thirty pound."

"And you outweigh *me* twenty pound, you young bantam, you!" laughed the second mate. "Come! I'm a better match for you than Bob is."

I flushed pretty red at that, for although I saw Mr. Barney was a man to respect, I did not think he handled his watch by the weight of his muscle.

"If you don't think so, put up your hands again, and we'll try a bout," said Mr. Barney, still laughing. "If you give me the kind of an eye Bob has, I won't chalk it up against you. The boys will tell you that if there's anything aboard the old Gullwing, it's fair dealing."

"And that's right for ye, Mr. Barney!" exclaimed the gorilla man. Then he winked at me. "Hit him as hard as ye kin, boy!" he whispered.

"Come on," said the mate, buttoning his jacket tight and taking his position. "You won't have to fight the whole crew to get a standing."

I saw he meant it, and I knew by his smile that he was a fair-minded man and wished me no harm. I secretly thought, too, that I was as good as he was.

"Time!" called Thank, rather shakily.

The very next second something happened to me that I hadn't expected. I thought I could parry his first blow, at least; but it landed under my jaw and every tooth in my head rattled. I

leaped back and he followed me up with a swift-ness that made me blink.

I parried several more swift blows and then hit out myself when I thought I saw my chance. He just moved his head a trifle to one side and my fist shot by. My whole weight went with it and I collided against him. He only rocked a little on his feet, and as I dodged back he struck me a blow on the chest that drove me half a dozen yards into the arms of the spectators.

"If I had placed that higher up—as I might—you would have been asleep, my lad," he said, coolly. "Don't you believe it?"

"I do, sir," I said, panting.

"I am just as much better than you, as you are than Bob," he said, laughing again. "He has no science and you have a little. But I have more science and so we're not fairly matched. And now, boys, that's fun enough for to-day," and he turned on his heel and went up on deck.

I tell you right now, I felt pretty foolish. But the men didn't laugh. The big man, whom I learned later was Tom Thornton, said:

"He's a smart little bit of a man, is Mr. Jim Barney. You might be proud to be put out by him."

"Excuse me!" I returned, feeling to see if all

my teeth were sound. "No kicking mule has got anything on him when he hits you."

"And his brother Alf, on the Seamew, is a match for him," said another of the men. "There's a pair of them—brothers and twins, and as much alike as two peas in a pod. I mind the time they was looking for some men down in a joint on Front Street, Baltimore, and a gang started in to clean 'em up. Thought they was dudes trying to be rounders. The Barney boys held off a dozen of them till the police came, and neither of them even showed a scratch."

I pulled myself together and went over to Bob, who was swabbing his face in a bucket of water. I held out my hand to him, and said:

"The second mate was right. If we'd fought rough and tumble you could have easily fixed me. But you've got lots of muscle and I bet that second mate doesn't sail without a set of gloves in his cabin. If he'll lend 'em to us I'll teach you what little I know myself about boxing."

"That's fair enough!" shouted Tom Thornton. "The boy's all right."

"I'm game," growled Bob, giving me his hand. "But I don't like fresh kids."

"That's all right," said I. "Mebbe I'll get salted a little before the voyage is over."

And so the affair ended in a laugh. But I guess I learned one lesson that I was not likely to forget in a hurry.

And both Thankful Polk and I had a whole lot to learn about this big ship. Although my chum had been five years from home (leaving his native village in the hills of Georgia when he was twelve) he had learned little seamanship. Nowadays ships do not receive apprentices as they used to in the palmy days of the American merchant marine, which is a regrettable fact, for it was from the class of apprentices that most of our best shipmasters came.

A seaman—a real A. B.—must know every part of the ship he serves, its rigging and what-not, just as any other journeyman tradesman must know his business. It is not necessary that an able seaman should be a navigator; but every navigator should be an able seaman. Such a man likewise should be something of a sail-maker, rigger and shipbuilder. In these days when the work of a crew is so divided that men are stationed at certain work in all weathers few men before the mast are all-round seamen. And this is likewise regrettable.

In the months I had spent upon the *Scarboro* I had learned much—and in that I had the advantage of Thank. Captain Rogers and Mr.

Robbins were both thorough-going seamen, and when we were not chasing whales I had been drilled by the mate, and by young Ben Gibson, the second officer, in the ropes, the spars, the handling of gear, and taught to take my trick at the wheel with the best man aboard.

And I was thankful for all this now, for although the Gullwing was a much larger ship, and differently rigged from the whaler, I could catch hold now pretty well when an order was given. I knew, too, that men like Captain Bowditch and Mr. Gates and Mr. Barney liked their hands to be smart, and I was not afraid to tackle anything alow or aloft.

The men told me, too, that "the old man" (which is a term given the captain aboard ship not at all disrespectful in meaning) was a terror for crowding on sail. Besides, there was a deeper reason for Captain Bowditch wishing to put his ship through the seas and reaching Baltimore just as soon as possible.

"Ye see," said old Tom Thornton, in the dog watch that afternoon, "the firm owns another ship like the Gullwing—the very spittin' image of it—the Seamew. They're sister ships; built in the same dockyard, at the same time, and by the very same plans. A knee, or a deck plank,

out o' either one would fit exactly into the similar space in the other—and vicy varsy.

“They was put into commission the same month, and they make the same v'yges, as usual. Cap'n Si Somes, of the Sewmew is about the same age as our skipper. They was raised together down east; they went to sea together in their first ship. And they got their tickets at the same time, since which they've always served in different ships, one mounting a notch when the other did. Rivals, ye'd call them, but good friends.

“But they're always and forever trying to best each other in a v'yge. They races from the minute they cast off moorings at Baltimore to the minute they're towed inter their berths again. They crowd on sail, and work their crews like kildee, and stow their cargoes, and unload the same like they was racin' against time. And now, this trip, they've got a wager up,” and old Tom chuckled..

“It was this here way: We battened down hatches the same morning the Seamew did at Baltimore, and the tugs was a-swinging of us out. Cap'n Si sung out from his poop: ‘Joe! I bet ye an apple I tie up here afore you do when the v'yge is over.’

“ ‘I take ye,’ says our skipper, ‘pervidin’ it’s a

Rhode Islan' Greenin'—I ain't sunk my teeth into no other kind for forty year—it's the kind I got my first stomach-ache from eatin' green, when I was a kid.'

"And that settled it. The bet was on," chuckled Tom. "And we fellers for'ard have suffered for it, now I tell ye! The Seamew beat us to Buenos Ayres by ten hours on the outward v'yge. We caught her up, weathered the Horn and was unloading at Valpariso when the Seamew arrived. But, by jinks! she beat us to Honolulu."

"How was that?" I asked.

"Made a better passage. We got some top-hamper carried away in a squall. To tell you the truth, Cap'n Joe carried on too much sail for such a blow. But we weren't long behind her at Manila, and my soul! how Cap'n Joe did make those Chinks work unloadin' an' then stowin' cargo again when we started back.

"The Seamew got away two days before we did. But we left Honolulu a few hours ahead of her, and she has to touch at Guayaquil—up in Equidor. As far as time and distance goes, however, both ships is about even. We had to unload a lot of stuff back there at Valpariso, and load again. Both are hopin' not to touch nowheres till we git home. And it wouldn't

surprise me none if we sighted the Seamew almost any day now, unless she's clawed too far off shore."

This good natured competition between the two big ships had, I believe, something to do with the smart way in which the crew of this one on which I sailed went about their work. Jack Tar is supposed to be a chronic grumbler; and surely the monotony of life at sea may get on the nerves of the best man afloat; but I seldom heard any grumbling in the fo'castle of the Gullwing.

However, there was another rivalry connected with this voyage of the sister ships—a much more serious matter—and, indeed, one that proved tragic in the end, but of this I was yet to learn the particulars in the eventful days that followed.

CHAPTER IV

In Which Captain Bowditch Crowds On Sail and There Is Much Excitement

In writing a story of the sea—even a narrative of personal experiences—it is difficult to give the reader a proper idea of the daily life of the man before the mast. It naturally falls that the high lights of adventure are accentuated while the shadows of monotony are very faint indeed. But the sailor's life is no sinecure.

Saving on occasion the work on shipboard is not very hard. The watch-and-watch system followed on all ships makes the work easy in fair weather; and foul weather lasts but for short spells, save in certain portions of the two hemispheres.

“Eight bells! Rise and shine!”

This order, shouted into the fo'castle at four o'clock in the morning, roused Thankful Polk and I from our berths. No turning over for another nap—or for even a wink of sleep—with that command ringing in one's ears. We tumbled out, got into our outer clothing, ran

our fingers through our hair (no chance for any fancy toilets at this hour) and went on deck with the other members of the captain's watch.

There was plenty of light by which to chore around, and Mr. Barney's sharp voice kept us stirring until five when we lined up at the galley door and each man got a tin of hot coffee—and good coffee it was too, aboard the Gullwing. Then buckets and brooms was the order and the ship began to be slopped and scrubbed from the bowsprit to the rudder timbers. No housewife was ever half as thorough as we had to be to satisfy Mr. Barney and the old man. Thank and I learned that Captain Bowditch made a tour of the deck every morning after breakfast, and if there had been any part of the work skimped he would call up the watch and have the whole job done over again.

“But that don't happen more'n once on a v'yage,” chuckled Tom Thornton, working beside us. “The feller that skips any part of the work he's set to do on this here packet, gets to be mighty onpopular with his mates.”

Thus warned, we two boys were very careful with our share of the scrubbing—and likewise the coiling down of ropes which followed. I can assure the reader that, when we were through, everything in sight was as spick and

span as it could be—every stain was holystoned from the deck, the white paint glistened, and the brasswork shone.

At seven-thirty the watch below was given breakfast and at four bells—eight o'clock—we were relieved and went below to our own breakfast; and that was not a bad meal aboard the Gullwing. There are no fancy dishes tacked onto Jack Tar's bill of fare—nor does he expect it; but on this ship food was served with some regard to decency.

On the Gypsy Girl "souse" was served in a bucket, set down in the middle of the long fo'castle table, and every man scooped his cup into the mess, broke in his hardtack, and inhaled it a good deal after the style of a pig at a trough. But for breakfast on this ship there was more good coffee, tack that was not mouldy and scraps of meat and potatoes fried together—a hearty, satisfying meal.

Each man washed and put away his own cup, plate and knife and fork. Some used their gulleys, or sheath-knives; but Thank and I had brought aboard proper table tools in our dunnage bags. After the breakfast was cleared away, and the fo'castle itself tidied up, the watch below busied itself in mending, sock darning, and such like odd jobs. A sailor has got

to be his own tailor, seamstress and housewife; and even such a horny-handed and tar-fingered giant as Tom Thornton was mighty handy with his needle and "sailor's palm."

Some of the men shaved at this time, one cut another's hair and trimmed his beard. The crew of the Gullwing respected themselves; the deck of the fo'castle was kept as well scrubbed as the deck above. Nobody came to the table without having scrubbed his face and hands clean; nor was the men's clothing foul with tar or the grease of the running gear. They may all have been "sword-swallowers" when it came to "stowing their cargo 'tween hatches," but cleanliness was the order, and the ordinary decencies of life were not ignored. These men may not have been particularly strong on etiquette, and were not "parlor broke," as the saying is; but they were neat, accommodating, cheerful, and if they skylarked some, it was fun of a goodnatured kind and was not objectionable.

I liked old Tom Thornton, for despite the cast in his eye, and his gorilla-like appearance, he was good hearted. He was just about covered with tattooing, I reckon. As he said, if he'd wanted to take any more indigo into his system he'd have to swallow it! Most of the

work had been done on him by a South Sea Islander who had sailed in whaling ships and the like and made a little "on the side" by tattooing pictures on foolish sailors.

"Taint done now, no more," old Tom said, shaking his head. "But when I was a youngster it was the fashion. Poor Jack can't afford to buy picters and have a family portrait gallery, or the like. But he used to be strong for art," and the old man grinned.

"I was wrecked with this here nigger-man I tell you about. About all he saved from the wreck was his colors and bone needles, and the patterns he outlined his figgers from. We was held prisoner on that blamed reef, living on stuff from the wreck, for three months. There wasn't nothing else to do. His tattooing me kept him from going crazy, and the smart of the thing kept me alive. So there you have it—tit for tat! He never charged me nothing for his work, neither, and I allus was a great lad for gittin' a good deal for my money."

Tom's legs were mural paintings of serpents and sea-monsters. He had anklets and bracelets worked in red and blue. On his back was a picture of three gallows with a man hanging in chains from the middle one. I believe that it was the ignorant South Sea native's idea of the

story of Calvary, for there was the typical cross and crown worked above it at the back of Tom's neck. The mermaid on Tom's chest could have won a job as fat woman with a traveling circus; but then, Tom had an enormous chest which had given the tattooer plenty of space to work on. Around his waist was tattooed a belt like a lattice-work fence. When he stripped to "sluice down," as he called his daily bath, he looked as gay as a billboard.

At ten o'clock (six bells) of the forenoon watch most of the watch below turned in for a nap, and at half past eleven we answered the call to dinner. At noon we were on duty again until four o'clock. In pleasant weather this afternoon watch is a mighty easy one. Besides the man at the wheel and the two on lookout, the others haven't much to do but tell stories, play checkers, or read. As long as everything was neat and shipshape the old man did not hound us to work at odd jobs as some masters do.

From four to eight p. m. the time is divided into two dog watches, although the second half of that spell is the actual dog watch. "Dog" is a corruption of "dodge," the object of this division being to make an even number of watches to the twenty-four hours so that there will be a daily changing or shifting, thus dodging

the routine. For example, the watch that goes below one day at noon will the next day come on deck at that hour.

At five-thirty our watch had supper and at six we took the deck once more until eight o'clock. Then we could sleep until midnight and from thence had the watch until four in the morning. It is a monotonous round—especially in fair weather. We were like to welcome a bit of a blow now and then, although the *Gullwing* was such a big ship, and her crew was so small, that all hands had to turn out to shorten or make sail. On some ships this fact would have made the crew ugly but these boys had even a good word for the cook or "doctor," and usually Jack looks upon that functionary as his natural enemy.

But during those first few days of the run down the coast of Chile it was seldom that we were called on to shorten sail. Captain Bowditch was living up to his reputation; the *Gullwing* foamed along through the short green seas with every sail she would bear spread to the favoring gale. With her four whole sails on the lower spars and all her jibs set, she spread a vast amount of canvas to the wind. And the only changes we made were in her topsails. Those the skipper kept spread every moment

that he dared; and it took a pretty strong gust to make him give the order to reef down.

When he left the deck himself, either day or night, he instructed his mates to call him before they took in an inch of cloth. And Mr. Gates and Mr. Barney were just as hungry for speed, as the old man. The Gullwing was heavily laden, but there was probably few stiffer vessels at sea that day than she. With plenty of ballast there was no gale or no sea that could capsize her.

She took cheerfully all the wind and all the sea could give her. A little loose water flopping around her deck didn't trouble Captain Bowditch. "Tarpaulin her hatches, clamp 'em down, and let her roll!" had been his order when we had got well away from our anchorage at Valpariso. We had good weather, however, as I have said, for some days.

Then suddenly, one afternoon in the first dog watch, it came on to blow. Carefully as the captain watched the glass, I do not think this squall was foretold. A more cautious navigator might have been better prepared for a squall. He wouldn't have had his topsails spread in any such gale as had been blowing. And when all hands were called to go aloft, the wind shrieked down upon us and the foretop-

sail and two staysails were blown clean out of the boltropes before the men could get at them.

"What are ye about, ye sawneys!" yelled Captain Bowditch, dancing up and down on the deck and shaking his fists at the men above. "Save my sails for me! Think I'm *made o'* sailcloth? And them right new fixin's, too! Git busy there!"

Oh, we were busy! I had been sent aloft and so had Thank. We were nimble enough in the shrouds; but we were not as smart about handling the stiff canvas as some. I found my chum beside me as we hauled down the stiff canvas upon the spar, and threw ourselves upon the folds to hold them till they could be secured.

"My law-dee!" gasped the Georgian boy, grinning. "Jest as lives try to pin an apron around the waist of a baby hipopotamus—what?"

I saw his wet, red, grinning face for a moment looking across at me. Then, suddenly, the ship keeled over, the rope on which we stood overhung those leaping, green, froth-streaked waves—waves which seemed hungrily trying to lap our feet. Thank disappeared! Something gave way, his weight left the sail to me alone. And perhaps, fearful for my chum, I bore off the canvas myself to look for him.

The next instant I was cast back by the wind tearing under the canvas and lifting it in a great balloon.

“Swish—r-r-rip!”

Like a banshee on a broomstick that sail kited off to leeward, and I was left hanging desperately to the shrouds, with the wind booming in my ears so that I could not even hear the angry roaring of the skipper below.

And all the time this question kept thumping in my head: “Where was Thankful Polk?”

CHAPTER V

In Which We See a Ship Sailing in the Sky

I had forgotten my own peril. Indeed, so disturbed was I for the moment for my chum's safety that I cared nothing for the lost sail. I yelled for Thank at the top of my voice, though doubtless the shrieking of the wind drowned all sound of my cries. And Thank, for all I knew, was already far to leeward, fighting in that tempestuous sea.

And then suddenly, through a rift in the flying spray that stung my face so cruelly and almost blinded me, I beheld something swinging from the ropes on which I stood. The ship was almost on her beam-ends and the waves broke just below me. There Thank hung by his foot, which had twisted in the ropes and was held firm, his head and shoulders buried in the foaming sea at every plunge of the laboring Gull-wing!

I shrieked again and, clinging with one hand with a desperate grip, I sought to seize him as he swung, pendulum-like, to and fro. *I could not reach him.*

But now the brave ship was righting herself. We rose higher and higher from the leaping waves. Thank swung back and forth and, as we came inboard, I feared he would batter his poor brains out against the wire cables, or against some spar.

He was unconscious. He was helpless. And it seemed as though I was helpless as well. Those few momentous seconds showed me plainly how deeply I loved the youth who had been my comrade in adventure and labor and peril during these last few months. I had never had a chum before of my own age—not one whom I had really cottoned to. Thank was as dear to me as a brother would have been.

As we rose higher and higher another fear smote me. If his foot loosened now and he fell, he would be dashed to death upon the deck below. In my struggles my hand found a loose rope. I hauled it in quickly, hung to the spar by my elbows while I formed a noose in the end, and was unsuccessfully trying to get this over Thank's head and shoulders when another man sprang to the footrope beside me.

"Git down there and grab him!" yelled this individual in my ear. "I'll hold you both."

It was Bob Promise and although he was the man aboard whom I least liked, he was an angel

of mercy to me just then. I knew his muscle and vigor. With one hand he clung to the rope and seized my belt with his other paw. I knew that belt would hold, and I swung myself, without question, head-downward.

It was only for a moment that he had to be under the strain of all my weight and Thank's as well. Then I had scrambled back to the footrope, and held my chum in the hollow of my arm. Thank was half drowned, but his eyes opened and he gasped out something or other before Bob steadied us both again upon the footrope. Later I realized that he tried to say, in his cheerful way: "That's all right, Sharp!"

Between us Bob and I managed to get him down to the deck. We should not have been able to do that without a sling had the squall not passed away and left the old Gullwing once more on a comparatively level keel.

When we landed upon the deck boards, Thank managed to stand erect. And we three shook hands with a sort of grim satisfaction. I don't think any of us ever spoke of the event thereafter, and our mates had not seen our peril, but we three were not likely to forget it.

The old man was still careening around the quarter, like a hen on a hot skillet, fussing about the lost sails. And scarcely had the squall

passed when he was ordering up new ones to replace those that had been lost. We went to work bending on the fresh sails while it was yet blowing so hard that most captains would have kept their crews out of the rigging.

I began to see that Tom Thornton had not been joking when he said that the men were paying the penalty for the skipper's betting an apple with Captain Si Somes, of the Seamew. Had it been a thousand dollars at stake, Captain Bowditch would have been no more earnest in his determination to beat the Gullwing's sister ship.

But the wind was little more than a stiff gale when the new sails were set and the ripping repaired. We drove along until night and then the air became very light. During the night a fog began to gather and when our watch was called at eight bells in the morning it was pretty thick.

"Looks like a Cape Horn soup," growled old Tom, as he stepped on deck. "Though we're a good bit of a ways from that latitude yet."

As we stumbled around the deck, doing that everlasting cleaning up that Mr. Barney watched so sharply, the fog began to thin and waver. Somewhere overhead there was a breeze; but

it was pretty near a dead calm down here on the deck of the Gullwing.

By the time the sun began to glow upon the edge of the sea, looking like a great argand lamp in the fog; overhead the billows of mist were rolling in imitation of the long, swinging swell of the sea itself. At first those billows in the sky glowed in purple, and rose hues, ever changing, magnificently beautiful! It was a seascape long to be remembered.

The sun rose higher. Its rays shot through the rolling mist like arrows. Now and then the breeze breathed on our sails and the Gullwing forged ahead at a better pace. The fog left us. We were sailing in an open space, it seemed, with the mist bank encircling us at a distance on a few cable-lengths, and the billows still rolling high above the points of our masts.

And then, to the westward, the curtains rolled back as it seemed for the scene that had been set for us. Like the stage of a great theatre, this setting of cloud and mist and heaving sea appeared, and there, sailing with her keel in the clouds, and her tapering masts and shaking sails pointing seaward, was a beautiful, misty, four-stick schooner.

"What do you know about that?" demanded Thankful Polk. "Do you see what I see, Sharp,

or have I 'got 'em?" That ship's upside down."

"It's a mirage," I murmured.

"It's a Jim Hickey of a sight, whatever the right name of it is," he rejoined.

Everybody else on deck was aware of the mirage, and a chorus of exclamations arose from the watch.

"It's the Gullwing herself!" ejaculated Bob Promise. "Of course it is! It's a four-sticker."

"How do you make that out?" demanded Thank. "I know derned well *I* ain't standing on my head, whatever you be."

"It's her reflection, sawney!" said somebody else.

"Oh! well I reckoned that I knew whether I was on my head, or my heels," chuckled the boy from Georgia.

But I had been watching the mirage very sharply. I knew just what sails were set upon the Gullwing, and I counted those upon the ship in the sky. Misty as the reflection was I could distinguish them plainly. And suddenly I saw a movement among those sails. *Sharply defined figures of men swarmed into her rigging.*

"That's not the Gullwing at all!" I shouted.

"That boy's right," said Mr. Barney sharply, coming out of the afterhouse with his glass, and

with the captain right behind him. "You've got good eyes on you, Webb."

"By jinks! It's the Seamew!" roared our skipper, the moment he set his eyes upon the mirage. "And if she's sailing that way, she'll never beat us to the Capes of Virginia."

A roar of laughter greeted this joke. But the ship in the sky began immediately to fade away, and it had soon disappeared, while the wind freshened with us and we forged ahead still faster. When the fog completely disappeared there was not a sail in sight anywhere on that sea, although Mr. Barney went into the tops himself and searched the horizon with a glass.

But I know that they made a note of the appearance on the log. Some of the sailors thought the Seamew couldn't be far from us, either head or astern; but I knew that the mirage might have reflected our sister ship hundreds of miles away. The incident gave us a deal to talk about, however, and an added savor to the race we were sailing half around the globe.

CHAPTER VI

In Which the Gullwing Suffers a Ghostly Visitation

“The words of Agur, the son of Jaketh. . . . There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: The way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent upon a rock, *the way of a ship in the midst of the sea.*”

That old fellow whose wise sayings make up the final chapter of the Book of Proverbs had a deal of experience and knowledge; but navigation was a mystery to him. And to see a great ship sailing straight away on her course, in the midst of the sea, without a sign of land anywhere about, is like to make one think of the wonder of it.

We picked up many a sail after the mirage of our sister ship, during the next few days; but none of them were the Seamew. The wind increased and the Gullwing went snoring through green seas, her bow in a smother of foam and a good deal of loose water inboard on occasion.

But that did not bother the captain. We were speeding up toward the Horn and little else mattered.

We were getting into a colder latitude, too. Now we were down about to the line where the Gypsy Girl had steamed in and out of the channels after seals. But we never saw the land. The Gullwing was keeping well off shore.

The keen wind blew a fitful gale. We were glad to get into the lee of the deck-houses when we were on duty. Thanks to Captain Rogers of the *Scarboro*, however, my chum and I were well dressed for colder weather; but we got each a suit of tarpaulins and hip boots from Captain Bowditch, for we had not owned them. We could safely dress in these water-shedding garments every watch above, when the weather was not fair; for the schooner was bound to ship a deal of suds.

In our watch besides old Tom Thornton, was another ancient mariner, and the only man not an American born aboard the Gullwing—August Stronson. He was a queer, gentle old man with the marks of dissipation strong upon his face, although most of his spare time below he sat and read a well-thumbed Swedish Bible. He was a man in whom Alcohol had taken a strangle hold on Will. A more than ordinarily good seaman,

when ashore he soon became a derelict along the docks, finally ending in some mission or bethel where he would be straightened out and a berth found for him again. He was only safe aboard ship. Eternally sailing about the Seven Seas was his salvation.

He was aboard the Gullwing, as Thank and I were, merely by chance. And his reason for wishing to make the port of Baltimore was a curious one—yet one that gives a sidelight upon the sailor's character. As a usual thing, Jack is grateful to anybody who does him a kindness, and he does not often forget a favor done him. Besides, he prides himself on "being square." Yet it seemed to me that old Stronson was carrying that trait farther than most seamen.

He had been picked up at Honolulu by Cap-Bowditch, after the two men before mentioned had deserted the Gullwing to go with a native trader into the South Seas. Stronson had already traveled by one craft and another from Australia and would have traveled, when he reached Baltimore, all of ten thousand miles to see just one man. He told me this story in one watch below and I think it worth repeating.

"Captain Sowle, who iss de superintendent of that mission where dey iss so goot to sailor-mans, lend me a dollar five years ago when I

was sick. I ban goin' to pay dat dollar, me! I ban going to Baltimore to pay him."

"But why didn't you send it to him by mail?" I asked the old fellow.

"Captain Sowle, gif me dat dollar in his own hand, and I haf to give it back to him mit mine. I could nefer forget his kindness—no. In many foreign ports I thought of him—how goot he wass. I long carry that dollar note in my shirt—yes. In Sydney I went to the sailor's mission one night and heard an old song das Captain Sowle sung to me and odders in Baltimore. I had that dollar note I haf saved mit me den. Why! I ban shipwrecked once and safe only dot dollar and a jumper. Luck foller me mit das dollar.

"I says to my mate dere in Sydney, 'Bill,' I says, 'I got de old man's dollar yet. Mecpe he need it for de poys when he sing dot old hymn to-night over seas.'

" 'Do you feel uneasy like?' Bill asks me.

" 'No,' says I, 'but I seems to hear the old man singing and I'm minding the old Bethel and the winter night he ban givin' me de dollar.' 'Well,' says Bill, 'you must bring your cargo to port and get a discharge. You must show de old man dat you sail straight. That's my verdict.'

"So we shook hands undt I go find me a berth to Manila—best I can do just then. I makes Honolulu on a Pacific Mail; but she drops me there. Then I finds de Gullwing. She iss de ship for me," added Stronson, smiling in his simple way. "She carry me straight for Baltimore, undt I pay das dollar to Captain Sowle."

Some of the men made a good deal of fun of Stronson because he was slow of intellect; but he was an able seaman and even the sharp-spoken Mr. Barney seemed to bear easy on the old man. He was stiff in his joints at times, for the sailor's chief enemy, rheumatism, had got a grip on Stronson. Thank and I saved him many a job aloft, and in return he patiently set about teaching us all he knew about splicing and knotting—which was no small job for either the old man or for us.

It was soon after this that we got the four days' gale that I, for one, shall not soon forget. The wind, however, did not increase so suddenly as before, and Captain Bowditch took warning in time and had the small sails furled. But when the gale fairly struck us we had enough lower canvas set in all good conscience. The ship fairly reeled under the sudden stroke of the blast.

With the wind, too, came the snow. Such a

snowstorm I had not seen for several years, for we had had two or three mild winters in New England before I had gone to sea. We were forced to reef down the big sails, though every order from the skipper to this end was punctuated by groans. The canvas was stiff and the snow froze on it, and we had a mess. Glad was I that the work was not to be done in the tops.

A smother of snow wrapped the Gullwing about and we plunged on without an idea as to what was in our path. The lookout forward could not see to the end of the jib-boom. The sea was lashed to fury and, again and again, a wave broke over our bows and washed the deck from stem to stern. To add to the wonder of it, somewhere in the depths of the universe above us an electrical storm raged; we could hear the sullen thunder rolling from horizon to horizon. At first I had thought this was surf on the rocks and believed we were going head-on to death and destruction; but the officers knew where we were and they assured us that the chart gave us an open sea.

The decks were a mess of slush and it was dangerous to go about without hanging to the lifelines that checkrowed the Gullwing from forward of the fo'castle to the after companion-way. Yet how the staunch craft sailed! She

shook the waves off her back like a duck under a waterspout, and seemed to enjoy the buffeting of the sea like a thing alive.

While the storm continued we got just such food as we could grab in our fists. Nothing was safe on the table. The doctor kept the coffee hot in some magic way; yet there were times when the ship rolled so that the lids flew off his stove and the fire was dumped on the deck of the galley.

Sixty hours and more of this sort of weather dragged past. I once said to Tom Thornton:

"It's a pity the skipper didn't try for the Straits, isn't it?"

"And what would the Gullwing be doing in the Straits, in a blow like this, my lad?" he demanded. "A big ship like her in that narrow way has little chance in a storm. The tail of such a gale as this would heave her on the rocks. There's not seaway enough there for anything bigger than a bugeye canoe."

"But the Scarboro made a fair course through it," I said.

"That greaser!" snorted the old A. B. "She can loaf along as she pleases. Sea-anchor, if there's a bit of a gale. But the Windjammer has to make time. These days the big sailin' ships hafter compete with them dirty steam

tramps. We can't risk bein' becalmed in any narrow waterway—no, sir!”

It was on the fourth night, with the wind blowing a hurricane and the snow as thick about us as a winding-sheet, that our watch had come on deck at midnight. I was sent as second man with Bob Promise to the wheel. It took both of us to handle the steering gear when the old schooner kicked and plunged so.

We were under close-reefed mainsail and jibs and were battling fearful waves. The sleet-like snow drove across her deck and all but blinded us. I had to keep wiping the slush off the binnacle, or the lamp would have been completely smothered and we could not have seen the trembling needle.

Sometimes the officer on the quarter was hidden from our eyes, but his voice reached us all right:

“Steady your helm! You lubbers act like your muscles were mush. Keep off! Can't you hear that sail shaking? You'll have us under sternway yet. Call yourselves sailors? You're a pair of farmers! What d'ye think you're doing? Plowing with a pair of steers? Steady!”

Bob muttered imprecations on Mr. Barney's head; but I knew better.

"He's nervous, that's all," I said. "He's always so when the skipper ain't on deck."

"All he thinks of is whether we're beatin' the Seamew, or not," growled Bob.

"I notice that bothers him," said I. "But *he* hasn't bet a Greening apple on the race, has he?"

"It's bigger than that, I reckon. They say it's something betwixt him and his brother Alf. They've been sore on each other for a year or more."

I knew Mr. Alfred Barney was second mate of the Seamew, and I wondered what the trouble was between the twin brothers.

But just as this moment something happened that gave our minds a slant in another direction. The snow squall had thinned. We could see pretty near the length of the deck from where we stood—Bob and I—at the wheel.

Suddenly my mate uttered a stifled yell and his hands dropped from the spokes.

"Looker there!" he gasped.

I hung to the wheel, although a kick of the schooner near sent me on my head.

"Catch hold here, confound you!" I bawled.

"There!" he cried again, pointing with a terror stiffened arm into the forerigging.

I saw a flash of light—a glow like that of a big

incandescent lamp bulb. It hung for fully thirty seconds to the very tip of one of the fore-topmast spars. Again, another flashed upon another point of the rigging. Bob Promise crouched by the wheel; he fairly groveled, while I could hear cries and groans from many of the hands 'on deck.

"What's the matter with you? What is it?" I demanded, still fighting with the wobbling wheel alone; and I am afraid I kicked him. "Catch hold here!"

"Corpse lights!" groaned Bob, not even resenting my foot. "We're all dead men. We're doomed."

CHAPTER VII

In Which Is Pictured a Race in Mid-Ocean.

There was a snapping and crackling in the air over the laboring ship. It sounded as though the taut stays were giving way, one after another. For the moment, what Bob said about "corpse lights" I did not understand; I was mainly giving my attention to the wheel.

But the ship came to an even keel for a minute and I was able to hold her on her course, and get my breath. Then I beheld the strange lights shining here, there, and everywhere about the rigging, and I was amazed. Not that I was frightened, as Bob and some of the others of the watch appeared to be. The sailor is a very superstitious person; and let him tell it, there are enough strange things happen at sea to convince a most philosophical mind that there is a spirit world very, very close to our own mundane sphere. There's a very thin veil between the two, and at times that veil is torn away.

But I knew in a minute that what Bob

meant by "corpse lights" were corposant lights and were an electric display better known as "St. Elmo's fire." The lights were globular in shape, and about four inches in diameter. There were apparently a score of them all through the rigging, and they appeared at intervals of a minute, or two. The driving sleet could not hide them, and the fires illuminated the ship and the sea for some distance around her.

It certainly was a queer sight, and the brilliance of the corposant lights was very marked. I heard Mr. Barney shouting from his station:

"Keep your shirts on, you hardshells! They won't bite—nor none o' you ain't got to go aloft to put 'em out. There's one sure thing about them lights—they won't set the rigging afire."

"Get up and take hold of this wheel, Bob," I exclaimed, "or I'll yell for help. I can't handle her proper if she plunges again."

He got up shakingly and took hold. When the sea was sucked away from the bow of the Gullwing next time we held her on her course. But my companion was still frightened and looked at the glowing lights askance.

"Holding your own there at the wheel, boys?" demanded Mr. Barney.

"Aye, aye, sir!" I replied, but Bob didn't even whisper.

Suddenly the last light disappeared—as suddenly as the first had appeared—and immediately there was a loud explosion over our heads and Mr. Barney pitched down the ladder to the deck. Several of the other men were flung to the deck, too, and Bob gave another frightened yell and started forward on a dead run.

He collided with Captain Bowditch, who had just shot up through the companionway.

"What's this, you swab?" yelled the skipper, grabbing Bob by the collar with one hand and siezing a rope with the other, as the ship staggered again. "What d'ye mean?"

Then he saw Mr. Barney just scrambling to his feet.

"What's this mutinous swab been doing, sir?" added the captain.

The second mate explained in a moment. But Bob suffered. The old man was in a towering rage because he had left his post.

"You flat-footed son of a sea-cook!" he bawled, shaking Promise, big as he was, like a drowned kitten. "What'd d'ye mean by leaving the wheel? That boy yonder kept his place didn't he? Scared of a light, be ye? Why, if a

sea-sarpint came aboard that wouldn't be no excuse for your leaving the helm. Git back there!"

And when he started Bob aft again he accelerated his motions with a vigorous kick in the broad of the seaman's back. Bob grabbed the spokes of the wheel, and braced himself, with a face like a thundercloud. I crowded down my amusement and perhaps it is well I did. The fellow was in no mood for enduring chaffing. When a man is both angry and scared a joke doesn't appeal to him—much.

I am reminded that this is a sorry scene to depict. Yet Captain Bowditch was a kindly man and not given to unjust punishments. And I believe that Bob got only what he deserved. Even terror cannot excuse a man for neglecting his duty, especially at sea. It is like a private in the ranks enduring the natural fear of a first charge against the enemy. No matter what he may feel in his trembling soul, for the sake of the example he sets the man next to him, he must crowd down that fear and press on!

The storm had broken, however. At daylight we found that four feet of the fore-topmast had been snapped off short, whether by the electrical explosion, or by the wind, we could not

tell. But that was the end of that bad spell of weather, thanks be! The Gullwing sailed through it, we spliced on a new spar, trimmed our sails, and tore on, under a goodly press of canvas, for the Horn.

But several of the crew remained gloomy because of the "corpse lights." Something was bound to happen—of course, something unlucky. The lights had foretold it. And Stronson, with Tom Thornton and other of the old salts, told weird tales in the dog-watch.

In spite of the hurricane we had made good time in this run from Valpariso. As far as I could see, however, nothing momentous happened at once; and the next important incident that went down in the ship's log was the sighting of the Seamew.

We really saw her this time—"in the flesh," not a ghostly mirage. She came out of the murk of fog to the south'ard at dawn and, far away as she was, the lookout identified her.

"Seamew, ahoy!" he yelled.

It brought all hands upon deck—even the mate himself who had just turned in, and the captain, too. There the sister of the Gullwing sailed, her canvas spread to the freshening morning breeze, her prow throwing off two high foamy waves as she tacked toward us.

She was on one tack; we were on the other. Therefore we were approaching each other rapidly. And what a sight! If a marine artist could have painted the picture of that beautiful ship, with her glistening paint, and pearl-tinted sails, and her lithe masts and taut cordage, he would have had a picture worth looking at. And from her deck the Gullwing must have seemed quite as beautiful to those aboard the Seamew.

The two ships were the best of their class—more trimly modeled than most. I had not realized before what a beautiful ship the Gullwing was. I saw her reflected in the Seamew.

She carried an open rail amidships; and her white painted stations, carved in the shape of hour-glasses, with the painted flat handrail atop, stood clearly and sharply defined above her black lower sides and the pale green seas.

Not that either ship showed much lower planking, saving when they rolled; they were heavily laden. With all her jibs and all her whole sails on the four lower spars, and most of the small sails spread above, our sister ship certainly was a beautiful picture.

But the old man wasn't satisfied. Through his glass he saw something that spurred him to emulation.

"She's got all her t'gallant-sails set, by Pollox!" he bawled. "Mr. Gates! what are you moonin' about? Get them men up there in short order, or I'll be after them myself." And as we jumped into the rigging, I heard him growling away on the quarter: "That's the way Cap'n Si beats us. He crowds on sail, *he* does. Why, I bet he never furled a rag durin' that four-day breeze we just struck, and like enough had the crew pin their shirts on the wash line inter the bargain."

Two vessels may be rigged alike and built alike, but that doesn't mean that they will sail exactly alike. The Seamew was a shade faster in reaching and running than the Gullwing. Mr. Barney told me that.

"But to windward we have the best of her. And that's not because of our sailing qualities. The difference is in the two masters," the second mate said. "Captain Joe can always get more out of his ship than Captain Si can out of his when the going is bad. In fair weather the Seamew will beat us a little every reach. But it isn't all fair weather in a voyage of ten thousand miles, or so," and he smiled—I thought—rather nastily.

I was reminded of the hint Bob Promise had given me that there was bad blood and no

pleasant rivalry between our second mate and the twin who held the same berth on our sister ship. Mr. Barney was in the tops studying the Seamew a good deal through the glass that day, too. I wondered if he was trying to see if his brother was on deck.

For we did not run near enough to her that day for figures to be descried very clearly either on her deck or in her rigging.

CHAPTER VIII

In Which It Seems That a Prophecy Will Be Fulfilled

We wallowed through the seas, but with comparatively fair winds, for two days. The Seamew would stand off on one tack, we on the other; and by and by we would lose her below the horizon; but, standing in, after some hours, we found her again and were glad to see that she had not pulled so very much ahead of us. But it made Captain Joe awful fidgety, and he certainly did keep the men hopping—reefing and letting go the topsails, and working every moment to gain a bit over his antagonist. Why, we might as well have been sailing a crack yacht for the America's cup!

All this activity was very well during bad weather; but the men began to get pretty sore when the hard work continued throughout the hours of fair days too. The Gullwing was, as I have said, short-handed. The sea laws cover such cases as this; but there are so many excuses masters may give for going to sea without suf-

ficient hands to properly manage the ship that it is almost impossible to get a conviction if the case is carried to court.

Besides, it is the law that, if a case is not proved against the master of a vessel, the men bringing the suit must pay all the costs. Jack Tar knows of something else to do with his small pay without giving it to "landsharks of lawyers." That is why being a sailor and being a slave is an interchangeable term. Many legislators, having the welfare of seamen at heart, have tried to amend the laws so that the sailor will get at least an even break; but it seems impossible to give him as fair a deal as the journeyman tradesman in any other line of work obtains.

Old Captain Joe Bowditch, as decent a master as he really was, had a streak of "cheese-paring" in him that made him delight in saving on the running expenses of his ship. Besides, he probably knew his employers, Barney, Blakesley & Knight. Many a sea captain takes chances, and runs risks, and sails in a rotten ship with an insufficient crew, because he needs to save his job, and if he doesn't please his employers, some other needy master will!

Although the Gullwing was so large a ship, there are larger sailing vessels afloat, notably

some engaged in the Atlantic sea-board trade, and a fleet of Standard Oil ships that circumnavigate the world. These are both five and six masted vessels; but many of them are supplied with steam winches, steam capstans, and various other mechanical helps to the handling of the sails and anchors. The Gullwing had merely a donkey engine amidships, by which the anchors could be raised, one at a time, or to which the pumps might be attached. The great sails on her lower masts had to be raised by sheer bull strength.

But in our watch old Tom Thornton was a famous chantey-man, and the way we hauled under the impetus of his rhythm, and the swing of the chants ("shanties," the sailor-man calls them) would have surprised a landsman. I learned that "a strong pull, a long pull, and a pull altogether" would accomplish wonders.

We were now down in the regions where the tide follows the growing and waning of the moon exactly. Indeed, the great Antarctic Basin, south of the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn, is the only division of the seas where the tide follows the moon with absolute regularity. This is because the great sweep of water here is uninterrupted by land.

The enormous wave, raised by the moon's

attraction, courses around the world with nothing to break it. Here in our northern hemisphere immense masses of land interfere with the coursing of this tidal wave; and the shallow seas interfere, too. In the Mexican Gulf, for instance, the tide seldom rises more than two feet, while up along our north Atlantic shores it often rises six and eight feet, while everybody has heard of the awful tidal wave of the Bay of Fundy.

The depth of the water, therefore, has much to do with tidal irregularities. Out in the open ocean, where the tide is abyssmal—that is, about five thousand fathoms—the speed of the waves is amazing. Where the depth decreases to five fathoms the tide cannot travel more than fifteen miles an hour. In England, for example, which is surrounded by narrow land-broken seas, the result is that they get some of the most terrible and dangerous tidal races and currents to be found anywhere on the globe.

In the South Seas—particularly at Tahiti—the ebb and flow of the tide is perfectly adjusted. It is always full tide at noonday and at midnight, while at sunrise and sunset it is low water. The rise and fall seldom exceeds two feet; but once in six months a mighty sea comes rolling in and, sweeping over the corral reefs,

nature's breakwater, it bursts violently on the shore. Indeed, sometimes this tidal wave inundates entire islands.

In various parts of the world the tide creates various natural phenomena. There is the whirlpool between the islands of Jura and Scarba, on the west coast of Scotland, known as the "Cauldron of the Spotted Seas." The Maelstrom upon the coast of Norway is another creation of the tide. The force of a heavy tidal current pushing up a wide-mouthed river, causes what is termed a "bore." The most striking example of this tidal feature is seen at the mouth of the Amazon, where a moving wall of water, thirty feet high and from bank to bank, rushes inland from the ocean.

The waves raced by the Gullwing's bulwarks with dizzy speed. We plowed on, gaining all we could in every reach, but noting likewise that the Scamew, when she was in sight, seemed to draw away from us. When we had beheld her in the mirage she must have been a long way behind.

I reckon Captain Bowditch prayed for foul weather. And he did not have to pray long in this latitude. We were in the district of the Boiling Seas. Fogs are frequent; gales sweep this section below the Horn almost continually

—sometimes from one direction, sometimes from another. All the winds of heaven seem to meet here and gambol together.

“He’s runnin’ us into trouble, that’s what he ban doing,” croaked Stronson. “De old man, I mean. He iss not satisfied with the fair wedder; and who but a madt man vould crave for a gale down here under de Horn?”

But we younger fellows laughed at the old Swede. We were almost as much excited in the race between the two windjammers as were Captain Bowditch and Mr. Barney.

“Remember!” croaked Stronson. “The corpus lights wass not for nottings. Trouble iss coming.”

“But not necessarily trouble to the ship,” declared Tom Thornton. “Them St. Elmo’s fires foreruns death.”

“Dey ban mean bad luck, anyway,” growled Stronson.

Thank and I listened to all this croaking with a good deal of amusement. It surely never entered my head that the prophecy of the old men might be in anyway fulfilled.

And I certainly did not feel any foredoom of peril myself. The expected gale came down. We passed within sight of the islet named Cape Horn, with a terrific wind blowing and the waves

running half mast high. The Seamew had then been dropped behind. Indeed, the last we saw of her, she was wallowing in our very wake.

"Gimme a breeze like this," roared Captain Joe from his station, to Mr. Gates and Mr. Barney, "all the way to the time we take our tug, and we'll be eating supper in Baltimore before that Seamew sights the Capes o' Virginia."

But this, of course, was only brag. The Seamew was not far behind us.

And then, that very night the prophecy of ill-luck was fulfilled, at least insofar as it affected me. Something broke loose and began to slat in the tops. Mr. Gates, roaring through the captain's speaking trumpet, shouted for all hands. We had barely got to sleep below, and I reckon I was half way up the shrouds before I got both eyes open.

It was a black night, with the wind coming in strange, uneven puffs, and the deck all a-wash with loose water. The ship was rolling till the ends of her yardarms almost dipped in the leaping waves.

My foot slipped; futilely I clutched at the brace with the tips of my fingers. I knew I was lost, and the shriek I uttered was answered by Thank's voice as I whirled downward:

"Man overboard!"

I shot down, and down, and down—and then struck the sea and kept on descending. I thought of Mahomet's coffin, hung between the heavens and the earth. I was hung between the ship's keel and the bottom of the vast deep, swinging in that coffin which can never rot—the coffin of the ocean.

CHAPTER IX

In Which I Pass Through Deep Waters.

But I came to the surface after a time—and with all my wits about me. I had need of them.

In these months that I had been knocking about the seas I had been in peril often. Nor was this the first time that death by drowning had threatened me.

But on no former occasion had I been in so desperate a strait. I know that in this rising gale the Gullwing could neither be hove to, nor could a boat be launched for me.

The schooner had gone on at the pace of a fast steamship. And the tide was sweeping me astern just as rapidly as the ship was sailing. When I rose breast high on the first breaker I saw the Gullwing's twinkling lights so far ahead that they seemed like candle flames.

I was alone—and this was one of the loneliest seas upon all this great, round globe!

But when one is thrown into such a situation of peril as I was then, his thoughts are so confused that it is only afterward—if there is an

afterward—that he analyzes his mental activities. Just then I had only the clear desire to live.

I turned on my back almost immediately and letting my legs hang well down, floated easily with my nostrils just out of water, and enjoyed two or three minutes of very, very grateful repose. I had been under the surface so long that it was some time before I could breathe clear to the bottom of my lungs again.

The buzzing in my head gradually died away. I began to think collectedly. I did not waste time thinking of rescue. At least, I could expect no help from my comrades on the Gullwing.

When I took my headlong plunge from the rigging I was clad in the heavy garb that most deep-water seamen wear. I had on two thick shirts, a heavy pea-jacket closely buttoned, and, worse than all, boots to my hips. Sooner or later all this weight of clothing would drag me down.

I had paddled half a day at a time in Bolderhead Bay; and even the fresh water ponds about Darringford House, with their hidden springs and under-tows, had never frightened me. I was the first boy to go in swimming in the spring and it had to be a pretty cold day in the

fall that drove me out of the water after the first plunge.

Of course, this sea off the boisterous islet of Cape Horn, was no warm bath. The chill of it struck through to the marrow of my bones; yet I believed I was good for several hours yet, if I could get rid of those clothes.

Undressing under water was a trick I had tried more than once; but it was those long-legged boots that scared me. They already made my lower limbs feel as heavy as lead.

Paddling with one hand I tore open my jacket with the other, ripping the buttons off or through the buttonholes as they pleased, and finally got one shoulder and arm clear. As I was fumbling to get the other arm out of the sleeve I felt the handle of my knife.

The coat stuck to my left shoulder; but a few slashes cleared me of the garment. It went floating away on the tide.

I had bobbed up and down in this operation; but was none the worse for the plunges under the surface, being careful to breathe no water into my lungs.

With the knife I slit both my shirts and tore them off. But the boots were the problem that shook me. I had to rest a bit before I tackled them.

I doubled up in a sitting posture and made a slash at one bootleg. Down I went—down, down, until it was a fight to get up again—especially with my fist closed upon my knife handle. It was pretty hard work; every slash meant a plunge under. It was slow.

I would draw up my left foot, for example, paddle vigorously with my left hand, take a long breath, make a slash with the knife in my right hand—and start for the bottom of the sea!

But I got those boots off at last, though not without suffering several cuts and slashes upon my legs, which the salt seawater stung tremendously. I had already gotten rid of my belt, and my trousers came off easier. I was sorry to lose some things in my pockets; but was glad to think that my father's chronometer was hanging above my berth in the Gullwing's fo'castle and that what money I had was in the keeping of Captain Bowditch.

And yet, it seemed utterly foolish to think of escape from this predicament. I had heard stories of wonderful rescues from drowning in mid ocean; but why should *I* expect a miracle? Here I was, struggling miles behind the Gullwing, as naked as the day I was born.

Not many minutes had been spent in these maneuvers, for all the time occupied in their

telling. For the Gullwing to have launched a boat to hunt for me would have been ridiculous. By day there might have been some chance of their finding me before I sank for good; but in the night—and a night as black as this—such an attempt would endanger a boat's crew for nothing.

If they had flung me life-buoys, they would have to come to me, for I could not see them. Gazing up into the sky I saw that scurrying clouds gave signs of a break in the weather. Here and there a little lightening of the gloom overhead showed the moon's rays trying to break through the mists.

Breast high again upon a rising wave, I took one swift, whirling look all about. Dense blackness everywhere on the face of the ocean; but just as I sank back again the moon, breaking through a rift, lighted up a silvery path before me and at the end of that path—for an instant—I believed I saw the glistening sails of the Gullwing!

It may have been a mirage—a vision. The blackness shut down upon me, and upon the sea again; but I fell back into the trough experiencing a more sickening sense of desolation than I had yet felt. It seemed to me as though

I had looked upon the last sign of human life that I would ever see.

I suppose a more hopeless situation than mine could scarcely be imagined. Yet I have philosophized upon it much more since than I did at the time. I would not let my mind picture the natural end of this adventure. My mind rebounded from the horrible thought that I was lost. I would not contemplate it.

In the middle of this broad, tempestuous sea—naked—alone. No hope of rescue by my companions on the Gullwing, with not a splinter to cling to, keeping from death only by constant effort. Yet there was something inside me that would not give up hope—that would not let my muscles relax—that clung with a desperation that clamped me to life!

But at first it was little exertion for me to keep afloat. I was in first rate physical condition and I was not afraid of sinking right away. I knew how to handle myself.

I lay on my back with my head deep, my mouth closed, only my nostrils above, conserved the strength of my legs by letting them hang deep, kept my arms outstretched, pretty well down in the water, palms down, and paddled gently, sometimes with both legs and arms, and again only with my hands.

The waves rolled me over occasionally and used me roughly; but I did not lose my head and never sank to any depth, having always plenty of air in my lungs. When I felt that my arms might become wearied I folded them under my head and kicked easily.

I am not sure that the sea subsided; but I believe it must have done so. It was a providence for me, then. I know that not many of the waves broke over me, and I seemed sliding up and down vast swells which heaved up out of Nowhere, gray and green and foam-streaked, and then disappeared and left me floating in the deep trough.

If anyone was ever literally rocked in the cradle of the deep, I was that person—from the crest of the wave, down, down, in a gradually diminishing rush, and then up and up to the crest of the next roller—and so on, over and over again.

Once I let my mind slip and began to calculate the chances for and against my escape. The conviction that it was impossible rushed over me and I turned over quickly and struck out with a savage, hand-over-hand stroke through the waves, with the momentary insane feeling that I must get somewhere!

The dogged idea of living as long as I could,

however, came to me again with fatigue, and I rolled over and rested, cradled in the waves.

My hand touched my knife, which still hung by its lanyard from my neck. An awful thought touched my mind, at the same moment. They say it is an easy death, this drowning; but I can imagine nothing more awful than to drift for hours upon the surface of the sea with the knowledge in one's mind that, after all, there is but one end possible. I opened my knife and held it tightly gripped in my hand a moment. Then I pulled the lanyard over my head and let the knife and all drop into the depths—and the curse went from me.

CHAPTER X

In Which the Impossible Becomes the Possible

Four hours had I floated on the tumbling sea, with the clouds above gradually breaking and with the moon finally paleing under the stronger light of the advancing sun. The blackness disappeared. A wind-driven sky arched the sea. And I lay looking up into heaven, waiting for the end.

For I was in a sort of mesmerized state toward the last, and kept myself afloat automatically. It must have been so; by no other means can I explain that I was still floating on the surface when the sun arose.

The rocking motion of the swells soothed me to a strange content that I can neither explain nor talk about sanely. I remember I babbled something or other over and over again; I was talking to the moon riding so high there among the rifted clouds.

* * * * *

In the night of July 14, 1886, the British ship

Conqueror, fourteen days out from Liverpool, bound for the lumber and fishing ports of the Miramichi, in the Straits of Northumberland, lost overboard Robert Johnson, A. B. The fact is registered on the ship's log. Three days after the Conqueror reached Miramichi, the Bark Adelaide, from Belfast, likewise came into port and when she was warped into her berth beside the Conqueror, the first man to step from the Adelaide to the Conqueror's deck was Bob Johnson.

There are reasons for the sailor-men being superstitious. The crew of the Conqueror would not sail with Bob Johnson again. He was *fey*. But really, he had only experienced a strange and harsh adventure. The Adelaide, following the unmarked wake of the Conqueror, had picked him up after he had floated for some hours.

And there are plenty of similar incidents in the annals of those who go down to the sea in ships to match this narrative of Bob Johnson.

* * * * *

The men who picked *me* up told me ~~that~~ I shouted to them; but I do not remember it. They were a crew of a boat put overboard by the *Seamew*, and they brought me aboard and

I lay in a bunk in the fo'castle all that day without knowing where I was, or how I had been snatched from an ocean grave.

About the first thing I remember clearly was that a young man stood beside my berth and looked down upon me with a rather quizzical smile. I knew him at once and thought that I must be in my old bunk aboard the Gullwing.

"I—I—. Have I been sick, Mr. Barney?" I asked, and was surprised to find my voice so weak.

He seemed surprised for a moment, too, and then I saw his face flush. He exclaimed:

"By the great hornspoon! this fellow is off the Gullwing."

"*I was off the Gullwing,*" I whispered. "But I guess this is no dream? I am aboard again now."

"No you're not!" he declared, but he still seemed bewildered.

"This isn't the Gullwing?"

"It's the Seamew," he said.

"But—but—you're Mr. Barney?"

"I am," he said, grimly. "But not the Mr. Barney you know, young man."

Then the mystery broke and I understood. It was Mr. Alf Barney I was talking to, the second mate of the Seamew.

"Then—then you picked me up," I murmured.

"And we had an idea that you were a merman," he said, with a quick laugh. "Out here in the ocean without a stitch of clothing on you."

I told him how I had got rid of my garments after falling overboard from the other ship. The men below gathered around to listen. They were men of about the same class as manned the Gullwing, I saw.

"You're the luckiest fellow that ever drew breath, I believe," said the second mate, finally. "You stay abed here till morning. Then you can go forward and talk to the captain. It's almost unbelievable."

And I scarce believed it myself—at least, not while I was so lightheaded and weak. But being a husky fellow my strength quickly came back to me, and the care of the kind fellows in the fo'castle set me on my pins the next day. I had a brief interview with Captain Si Somes—a long, cadaverous, hatchet-faced man who barked his words at one as though he did not like to waste either voice or words.

"So Cap'n Joe didn't try to pick ye up?"

"I reckon he couldn't. It was blowing pretty hard just then."

"That's like the old murderer," he snapped.

"Didn't clew down his tops'ls quick enough of course. He means to beat me if he kin."

"Yes, sir," I said.

"Well, he won't. We'll pick him up if the wind keeps this a-way."

"No chance of my getting back to her I sp'ose?" I suggested.

"To the Gullwing?"

"Yes, sir."

"Wa-al! I ain't goin' to waste no time puttin' you aboard. He's short-handed anyway. He allus is. I'll feed ye for the sake of keepin' ye," and he cackled rather unpleasantly.

I didn't like him as well as I did Captain Bowditch. And my interest was centered in the success of the Gullwing, too. I wanted to get back to her and see her win the race.

I found the fo'castle hands of the Seamew just as much interested in the rivalry of the two ships as the Gullwing's hands were. They believed they were on the better craft, too.

"Why, she sails a foot and a half to the Gullwing's one in fair weather," one man told me. "Wait till we get out of this latitude. You'll see something like sailing, then, when the Seamew gits to going."

I thought she was sailing pretty fast just then, and said so.

"If she ever struck another craft—or anything drifting in the sea—she'd just about cut it down with that sharp bow," I observed.

"Ain't much danger of running into anything down here. We ain't seen another sail but the Gullwing—save one—for a week."

"We hadn't spoken a vessel on the Gullwing for a number of days," I replied.

"No. Not many windjammers just now in these waters. And all the steamers go through the Straits," my informant said. "But this craft we spoke three days ago was a-wallowin' along pretty well—and she had a tow, too."

"A steamship, then?"

"No. She was a two-stick schooner, but she had a big auxiliary engine and was under both steam and sail. The Sea Spell, she was."

"The Sea Spell!" I cried, in surprise. "I know her. I've been aboard her. Cap'n Tugg, skipper and owner."

"That's the Yankee," said my friend. "And ain't he a cleaner? What do you suppose he had in tow?"

I was too amazed to answer, and the man went on:

"That's one cute Yankee, that Adoniram Tugg. If there wasn't but two dollars left in

the world he'd have one in his pocket and a mortgage on the other."

I had to laugh at this description of the master of the Sea Spell. And it hit off Adoniram pretty well, too.

"That Yankee has made a killing this time," continued my informant. "He has been for weeks cruising south of here, so he yelled across to Cap'n Somes, hunting for an old whaler stranded in the ice."

"The Firebrand. I know about her. Indeed, I've seen her," I said, and told him the story of my cruise on the Gypsy Girl and how we had come across the frozen ship and I had boarded her.

"Well! don't that beat cock-fighting!" ejaculated the seaman, who was called Job Perkins. "That old ile boiler was worth a mint of money."

"I know it. They said she had fifty thousand dollars in oil aboard."

"And if Adoniram Tugg makes port with her he'll turn a pretty penny. Salvage and all," ruminated Job.

"What do you mean?" I gasped, suddenly awakened to the fact that I was listening to a mighty queer story.

"Why, that's what Tugg was tugging," and Job smote his knee and laughed at his own joke.

"He was tugging *what?*"

"Why, I told you he had a ship in tow. She was a sight, she was! Her masts were just stumps; there wasn't ten feet of her rail that hadn't carried away, and she was battered and bruised and looked like she'd sink under the surface every time a wave struck her.

"But that cute Yankee had broached oil barrels on her deck, and she was just wallowin' along in a pond of ile—a reg'lar slick. The waves couldn't break over her," declared Job, still laughing. "I reckon he'd patched up her hull in some way, and it looked to me as though he'd tow her into San Pedro, at least."

"But, man alive!" I cried. "What was she? What was the Sea Spell towing?"

"Why, that Firebrand," he said. "And he'll make a mint of money out of her, as sure as you're a foot high."

CHAPTER XI

In Which I See That There Is Tragedy in This Ocean Race

I was dumfounded by this story of Job Perkins. Later it was corroborated by the other hands. It had really been Adoniram Tugg and the Sea Spell that had sailed near enough to this ship for conversation between the two skippers. And the Sea Spell actually had that old whale-ship in tow.

This was the astonishing part of it: The fact that the Firebrand was not at the bottom of the seas. I thought I had seen her rained upon by ice—beaten down by the bursting berg—driven under the leaping waves.

Yet, come to think of it, the rotating icefield had turned so as to hide the frozen ship from us aboard the Gypsy Girl when the ice split up, and a curtain of ice-mist and leaping waves had really hidden the spot where the Firebrand lay.

I had taken it for granted that the frozen ship—more than a year and a half in the ice—had found her grave right then and there. But

I remembered how sound the hulk of the whale-ship seemed when I went aboard of her. Only her spars and upperworks were wrecked. She had collided with the ice and slid right out of the sea at the collision. Perhaps the blow had never made her leak a drop!

And then it smote upon my mind that the man of mystery, Tugg's partner, must be alive, too.

That stern, sturdy man with his gray beard and hair, and his wonderfully sharp eyes, who had stuck by the frozen ship when his mates were driven off, and had battled against the gang of sealers to preserve the treasure of oil from their greed—this man in whose presence I had felt a thrill not yet to be explained even in my most serious times of thought. Why, Professor Vose must be alive! There was no doubt of that.

I could remember very distinctly our brief interview upon the frozen ship. How quickly he had disarmed me and showed me that he was my master. I could imagine that he had not given up hope even when the ice split up and the Firebrand had slid back into the water amid the crashing bergs and boiling sea.

Whoever this man was, he was a person of marked character. He had impressed me deeply and I felt that I could never really get him out of

my mind. Be he Jim Carver, the renegade that had stolen money from the fish firm back in Bolderhead, or Professor Vose, the marvelous scientist that Tugg claimed him to be, the man who had risked his life for the fortune of oil aboard the Firebrand, was an individual whom I should never forget.

I can't say that I was as pleased, as the hours passed, with my situation aboard the Seamew as I had been on her sister ship. In the first place, I had no proper niche here. I was not one of the crew. I was really an outsider—and from the enemy's camp at that.

There seemed to be a different spirit in this crew. They spoke more bitterly of the Gull-wing's company. They seemed to have no good word for Captain Bowditch and Mate Gates, and it was from Job Perkins that I finally got an insight into the real significance of the rivalry between the sister ships.

"Ye wanter jump quick, young feller, when Mr. Barney speaks," Job advised me.

"I know. That is the way it is with *our* Mr. Barney," I replied.

"Shucks! Jim Barney's another sort of a man from Alf Barney."

"Not to the naked eye," I responded, laughing. "I couldn't tell 'em apart."

"That's because you don't know either of them very well."

"Why—I don't know. I think I know our Mr. Barney pretty well. He's a smart second officer and altogether a good fellow, too."

"Smart! Why, he's a fool to his brother Alfred," declared Job. "They ain't in the same class—them boys. No, they ain't."

"Why, I thought they were considered very much alike," I murmured.

"Alf will show Jim, I reckon, how much better he is," and Job chuckled. "Ye see, they useter be the best of friends, though brothers——"

"What do you mean by that?" I cried. "Hadn't brothers ought to be the best of friends?"

"Never had a brother, had ye?"

"No. For which I'm awfully sorry."

"I had brothers. You needn't be sorry," said Job, in his sneering way. "And I reckon that is the way Alf Barney looks at it. Brothers can be in your way, I tell ye. I found it so. So does Alf Barney. Them boys is rivals."

"Well, so are Captain Si and Captain Joe."

"Huh! Them old tarriers!" snorted Job, very disrespectfully. "They only play at fighting each other. These Barney boys mean business."

"But why?" I demanded.

"Well, it's something about their uncle. You know, their uncle, old Jotham Barney, is senior partner of the firm?"

"Yes."

"And he's put 'em into the business. Not that he's showed favoritism. No. These Barney twins air good seamen."

"I'm glad you will allow that," I said, rather sharply.

"Yes. Jim is good; but Alf is a corker! a crackajack!" chuckled Job. "They begun to be rivals in a serious way previous to the v'ye before last."

"Ye see, there ain't but one rung at the top o' any ladder. And there can't but one man stand at the top of a pyramid. When old Jothan passes in his checks there will be just one chance for a nephew to take his place."

"You mean that the two boys are jealous of who will get the old man's money?"

"And stand in his place in the business," said Job. "Jothan isn't one for dividing power. He's always been the cock o' the walk in the firm. He'll expect the nephew that takes his place to be the boss. Can't divide responsibility. That is the way he looks at it."

"And a bad thing for the Barney boys," I muttered.

"Well, he puts it to his nephews two years ago," continued Job Perkins. "He tells them they're running too even. He can't tell which is the best man. He don't believe they are just alike, even if they be twins.

" 'You git up and dust, boys,' he said. 'One of ye do something different from the other. Ye air jest of a pattern. I can't tell which is the man and which is his reflection in the glass.'

"Ye understand, old Jothan didn't know which to put down in his will to be boss of his money and the firm. The boys have got to show him. He gives 'em both the same chance, but he expects one to beat the other.

"Old Jothan begun before the mast. He believes in the boys working out their salvation aboard ship. And even so near a thing as these two craft racin', and one beating the other, will tell in the favor of the second mate who's aboard the winning ship."

"I can't believe it!" I said to Job.

"You don't hafter—only watch. Old Jothan is getting tired of holding on to the business. He wants to be shown who is the best man of the two boys. That best one he'll take into the

House after this voyage—and you mark my word, sonny, that best man is going to be Mr. Alf Barney.”

I didn't know whether Job had told me the truth, or not; but I was sorry to learn of the sordid rivalry between the two brothers. It was tragic—no less; and I wondered what would come of it in the end?

But my wildest imaginings would have been tame indeed beside what really was to be the outcome of the misunderstanding between Jim and Alf Barney.

CHAPTER XII

In Which the Captain's Dog Goes Overboard

The heavy weather could not last forever; we came to a comparatively calmer season of several days. But the Gullwing was not sighted and I began to be worried. So many things might easily happen to her. The officers and crew of the Seamew were interested in finding the sister ship, too; but their comments upon her absence were neither kindly nor cheering.

"Is she still ahead, or has she sunk?" demanded Cap'n Si, after an examination of the entire circle of sea through his glass.

"I bet we've sailed clean around her," said the first mate, chuckling. "She's in the discard."

"No," said Cap'n Si. "It couldn't be that."

"She's reached land, then," grinned the mate pointing downward.

I thought that after all, both the crew and officers of the Seamew were little like my friends aboard the Gullwing. But we had such fitful winds for a time and made so little speed, that I reckon all hands were badly rasped.

We sighted several craft in these seas—all windjammers; but none of them proved to be our sister ship. We were now in the South Atlantic, and had clawed well off from the threatening rocks of Terra del Fuego. We had passed from one great sea to another, and the prow of the Seamew was turned northward. She was headed for home in earnest.

The men and officers were decent enough to me. I had been drafted into the mate's watch and I was smart at my duties and had learned a deal aboard the Gullwing which came into good play aboard her sister ship. But I wasn't happy.

The captain had a big Newfoundland dog aboard—Major. He was the pet of the crew and was a good fellow. Every day that it was not too rough he went overboard for his bath—usually in a sling made of an old sail, although in these waters there was not so much danger of sharks as in the more tropical seas.

However, there were other wicked marine creatures—far more bloodthirsty than Mr. Shark. And we had occasion to find this fact out for ourselves within a few days of my coming aboard the Seamew so strangely.

We had a morning when the sea was almost calm. The wind scarcely gave the ship head-

way, and the canvas slatted and hung dead, from time to time. We all "whistled for a breeze."

Along about the middle of the morning watch a school of porpoises came into view. First we saw them in a string to windward, and stories of sea-serpents, told by both seamen and landsmen, came to my mind. In the distance, following one another with an undulating motion through the short seas, the porpoises looked like one enormously long creature—a huge serpent indeed.

The porpoises struck a school of small fish nearby and then there was fun. The big fish sported all around the ship, rolling and bouncing through the water in much excitement.

The Captain's dog likewise grew excited. He ran to the open rail and barked and yapped at the sea-pigs; and I believe that one of the men slyly "set him on" at the porpoises.

However, to the surprise of the watch on deck (the captain was below), Major suddenly leaped the rail and went plump into the water.

"Hi, there!" cried Job Perkins. "That dog'll git inter trouble; and then what will Cap'n Si say?"

I fancy the surprise of the porpoises when Major got among them was quite as great as the

amazement of the men on the deck of the slow moving Seamew. The schooner was just slipping through the sea, the short waves lapping against her hull very gently. Major could easily have kept up with us.

The porpoises were sailing around and around the ship by this time, and the big dog bounced among them, barking and biting—or trying to bite—and otherwise acting like a mad dog. He plunged first for one porpoise, then for another, rising as lightly as a dog of cork on the waves, and throwing himself about in great abandon.

He so excited the porpoises that they made a general charge upon him. The dog beat a retreat in a hurry; but the sea-pigs had their “dander up” now and a score of them followed him, jumping, snorting, and tumbling about, evidently much delighted at putting the black stranger to flight.

Major came towards the ship with a rush—his only refuge. The men cheered him excitedly; and the watch below was aroused and rushed up to see what was going on. So did Captain Some appear, and the moment he saw the dog with the big fish after him, he sang out for the sling and scolded us unmercifully for letting Major overboard.

I verily believe that the porpoises would have

torn the noble fellow to shreds in a very few minutes. When Major came over the side, he was cut in several places and one of his ears hung from a thread or little more. I learned then that, although the porpoise is such a playful creature, and apparently harmless, it has means of defending itself not to be sneered at!

I was leaning on the forward port rail, looking idly across the stretch of comparatively quiet sea (the porpoises having rushed away to lee'-ard), when I saw rising to the surface not many furlongs from the ship's side, a great brownish mass that I took to be seaweed.

After a storm we often met fields of rock weed, wrenched from the shallow banks underneath the ocean by the terrific waves. This rising mass was not much different—in first appearance—from many weed-fields I had seen.

Mr. Alfred Barney was seldom on deck without his fowling-piece—a beautiful, double-barreled shotgun—in weather like this. He was a splendid wing shot and seemed to delight in bringing a gull flapping down into the sea, although he never shot at albatross.

"What you looking at, Webb?" he demanded of me, suddenly, coming around the corner of the forward house, gun in hand.

"Why, sir," said I, just making up my mind

that I had made a mistake in my first diagnosis of the nature of the brown mass that had now risen to the surface, "why, sir, I believe it is something alive."

"Something alive?"

"That thing off there," I replied, pointing to the object that had attracted my attention.

He stepped to my side quickly and shaded his eyes under the palm of his hand as he gazed at the peculiar looking brown patch.

"A whale's back?" I suggested, as he remained silent.

"No. It hasn't got slope enough," replied Mr. Alf Barney. "By George, though! it's alive."

"That's what I thought," I said. "I believed it moved—there!"

A tremor of life seemed to seize the object and passed all through it. Whatever it was, its length was fifty or sixty feet.

"Maybe it's dying," I said. "Some great beast——"

"Not a bat-fish," he muttered, half raising his rifle.

"No, sir. I don't see either head or tail to it."

It moved again—rather, it quivered. I can scarcely express the feeling of horror and dislike

for the thing that came over me. I shuddered.

"I wish it would go away," I muttered.

Mr. Barney laughed, shortly. He raised his gun again. Suddenly we heard a sharp, mandatory voice behind us:

"Don't do that, Mr. Barney!"

We both turned. It was the mate, Mr. Hollister. He was a dark, stern, silent man, who spoke to the men without much bustle, but who evidently expected to be obeyed the first time.

"That's a giant squid, Mr. Barney," said the mate. "He's 'bad medicine.' You don't want to fool with one of those fellows. I did so once to my sorrow."

CHAPTER XIII

In Which I Learn a Deal About Sea Monsters in General and the Giant Squid in Particular

"A squid of *that* size?" cried the young second mate, doubtfully, while I gave my closer attention to the long, dark brown body that lay quivering upon the surface of the sea.

"There's bigger," said Mate Hollister, grimly. "Ask any old Norwegian hardshell about the 'kraken.' I don't mean the octopus; I mean the real devil-fish—the squid."

"I know the octopus and the squid are two different creatures," said Barney.

"Yes. And that yonder is a squid—a devil-fish of the largest size. There! you can see his fore-arms now—look!"

I had observed something moving thirty feet beyond one end of the bukly brown creature. Two snake-like tentacles suddenly whipped out of the water. They bore between their ends a struggling fish. In a moment tentacles and fish disappeared, apparently sucked in toward the head of the monster.

"Good-bye, Johnny Fish!" said Mr. Hollister, grimly. "The parrot-beaks of that gentleman have snapped him up."

I had seen small squid. This beast lying on the sea so near us was between fifty and sixty feet long, with an average diameter of something like five feet, and a ten-foot breadth of tail.

The squid are the natural food of the sperm whale. Often the whale is so greedy for the squid that it tackles one of these giants and swallows the hard and indigestible beak which, causing a disease in the cetacean's stomach, sometimes brings about the death of the gourmand. As parts of squid beaks have been found imbedded in masses of ambergris, scientists are quite convinced that this gormandizing of the sperm whale on squid is the immediate cause of that secretion in its stomach which, strange as it may seem, is the basis of many of the best perfumes. Ambergris is a very valuable "by-product" of the sperm whale.

The orca—that tiger of the sea—is inordinately fond of the squid, too, as a diet. This devil-fish, with its eight short arms, each covered on the under side with innumerable "suckers," and its two fishing-arms which have suckers only at the extremity, excites no fear in the killer-whale.

Concealed at the base of the squid's ten arms is the terrible beak, shaped like that of a hawk, except that the upper jaw shuts into the lower. This beak is likewise dark brown in color, almost black at the tips, and is supported by powerful muscles.

Years ago there was a huge squid captured at Catalina, on the southern shore of Trinity Bay, Newfoundland. This squid was bought by the New York Aquarium and was the largest perfect specimen of its kind ever examined by scientists. Of course, they had to satisfy themselves with a post-mortem examination!

The beak of this immense fish—which could not have been much larger than the one we were contemplating from the deck of the *Seamew*—was as big as a six-gallon keg.

No animal can have a more formidable appearance, or a more deadly grasp, than these squid. It would seem as though the long, flexible, muscular tentacles were a sufficient means of defense and offense, without their being armed with the terrible suction cups.

These cups have a serrated edge like a hand-saw, and are used for anchors as well as to secure prey. They cling with the greatest tenacity, it being easier to tear away an arm from the body of the squid, than to force the beast to give up

its hold. It has all the desperate nature of a bulldog.

The beak, or jaw, is provided with terrible teeth, and even the tongue is covered on the upper part by a horny bed, bristling in the center with a series of recurving teeth, while its edge is armed with three other erect teeth, which are slender and hooked. A man might as well put his hand into a knitting machine and expect to take it out unscarred, as to risk a hand in the jaws of a squid. Those teeth tear the creature's food to shreds.

And one other characteristic the squid possesses which gives it advantage over both enemy and prey. When excited, and at will, it can eject a substance like ink—indeed, it was used by the ancients as ink—by which it clouds the sea, and so often escapes an enemy. Its own eyes being of a phosphorescent nature, it can see well enough through the haze of this cloud of ink, therefore its prey cannot escape. Besides, its fishing arms being three times the length of its other tentacles, the squid can “fish a long way from headquarters.”

This ink of the squid, or cuttle-fish, when dried, is used in water-color painting, and is known by the name of “sepia.” It is practically indestructible.

Now, all this by the way of introducing the squid. The Seamew crept by the creature and I, for one, was not sorry to see it finally disappear. And from what the men told about the cuttle-fish I judged that it would have been the part of unwisdom for Mr. Barney to have fired at the creature.

"Lemme tell you," said old Job Perkins, leaning on the rail beside me. "'Them ain't critters to fool with. I know. I been there and learned."

"Did you ever get real close to a big squid, Job?" I asked him.

"Big enough and near enough to suit me," he said, wagging his head and expectorating over the rail. "I went up against a reef-squid once—in the Galapagos, it was—and that was enough for Job. Yes, sir!

"I was in the clipper ship Chelsea that time, I was," continued the old man, taking another "chaw." "Cap'n Daggett ordered a boat ashore for turtles. He shot 'em for soup and fresh meat. Good eatin', too. But I took a seal-club with me, for I wanted a sea-lion's skin to make me a pair of moccasins, and I'd heard 'em roaring when we dropped anchor.

"I went off by myself and waded around a low, rocky point, in water not ha'f knee deep,

but deep jest outside, when I saw Mr. Squid moving along a-top of the water. He made considerable thrashing as he come along, like a whirligig waterwheel; his body part looked bigger than I am, and his arms two or three times as long—at any rate, them two long arms was tremendous.

“It headed into a little bay ahead of me,” pursued Job, “and when it got into about three foot of water it dropped anchor and began to feel around with three or four of its arms. The upperside of them arms were brown colored like the rocks, with wrinkles and stiff bristles all along the edge; the underside was white—sort of a nasty, yallerish, dead-looking white—with suckers like saucers in two rows. What I took to be the head had something like eyes; but I couldn’t make ’em out plain.

“Ye know how it is when ye see a snake, when you’re walking on shore,” said old Job. “Ye always want to try and kill it. That’s the way I felt about that squid. I didn’t think of any danger when I waded to it, but it seemed to be watchin’ me, for it squared round, head on. I hit it a clip with my iron-bound seal club, when, quick as a thought, it took a turn around the club with one o’ them short suckers, and held on. I pulled my blessedest, but the critter was

too much for me. Then's when I'd oughter backed out.

"But I was obstinate and I kept tugging at the club. Just then it showed its head—it shot out from the knob in front, a brown-and-purple spotted thing with the eyes showing. And in a second one of its arms was around me. It wound around my bare leg and another shot around my neck. The suckers took hold like a doctor's cups.

"It began to heave and haul on me. You kin guess I pulled and hollered. I got out my knife and hacked at it, but it would have mastered me—it sure would!—if Cap'n Daggett hadn't come running along the shore and fired both barrels of his gun into its head. Then it let go and slid back into deep water, squirting its nasty ink all about.

"I ain't never fooled with no squid again," concluded Job Perkins. "They ain't no pets."

It was later in that day, when I was standing my trick on lookout, and the Seamew had got a better wind and was forging ahead at a spanking pace, that Mr. Hollister and Mr. Barney stood near me and I heard the second mate ask the older man about the experience *he* had had with a giant squid.

"Yes," said Mr. Hollister, "when I was a

young fellow I ran against one of those squids, and I never want to bother with another one. I was mate of a little schooner—the Pearl, she was—150 tons and a crew of six men forward, with the cook. We were bound from the Mauritius to Rangoon in ballast, to return with paddy, and had put in at Galle for water. Three days out we fell becalmed in the bay—about latitude 8 degrees 50 minutes North, longitude 84 degrees 5 minutes East.

“On the 10th of May about five o'clock in the afternoon—eight bells, I know, had gone some time before—we sighted a two masted screw steamer on our port quarter, about five or six miles off. Very soon after, as we lay motionless on a sea like glass, a great mass rose slowly to the surface about half a mile on our larboard side, and remained spread out, as it were, and stationary.

“Even at that distance I could see that it was fully as long as the Pearl, and I sung out to the skipper to ask what he thought it was.

“‘Blest if I know,’ says he. ‘Barring its size, color and shape, it might be a whale. Some deep-sea ~~cr~~itter, sure enough,’ and he dove below and came up with a heavy rifle.

“The crew was discussing it, too, and as the skipper was preparing to fire at the thing, Bill

Darling, a Newfoundlander, exclaimed, putting up his hand:

“ ‘Have a care, Skipper. That ere is a squid and it’ll capsize ye if ye hurt him.’ ”

“I’d heard of squid, and seen squid,” proceeded Mr. Hollister, “and so had the skipper. But we both laughed at old Bill. The skipper up with his gun and let her go. He hit the thing, and it shook all over; there was a great ripple all around him and he began to move.”

“ ‘Out with all your axes and knives!’ shouted Bill, ‘and cut at any part of him that comes aboard.’ ”

“The old fellow taking the deck in that way made the skipper mad, and I was some surprised myself. You know how old sailors are—superstitious, as Negroes were in slavery. We couldn’t do anything to move the schooner, of course, and the skipper and I didn’t say a thing to the crew. Bill and the two others got axes and one other a rusty cutlas. We were all looking over the side at the advancing monster; but I for one, didn’t believe it was dangerous.

“We could now see a huge, oblong mass, moving by jerks, just under the surface of the water, and an enormous train following. The oblong body was at least half the size of the Pearl

and just as thick. The wake, or trail, might have been a hundred feet long.

"In the time I've taken to tell you," said Mr. Hollister, "the brute struck us and the ship quivered under the thud; I wasn't scared a mite until then. The skipper gave a yell and plugged away with his rifle another time. And then monstrous arms like trees seized the vessel and she keeled over; in another second the monster was aboard, squeezing its great polypus bulk in between the two masts.

"Bill screamed, 'Slash for your lives!' But all our slashing and yelling didn't do a mite of good. Holding on by his arms, the monster slipped back into the sea again, and dragged the vessel down with him on her beam-ends.

"The skipper and I were thrown into the water. I caught sight of old Bill and one of the others squashed up betwixt the mast and one of them arms. It was an awful sight, I tell you.

"Of course, the Pearl's hatches were open and in a few moments she filled and went down. Those two went with her. The rest of us escaped the brute's tentacles and a boat from the Strathowen—the steamer we'd seen—picked us up a little later.

"That was the finish of the Pearl and two brave men," added Mr. Hollister, gravely.

“And she isn’t the only craft that’s been carried down by a giant squid. Most folks I’ve told it to think it’s a sailor’s yarn. But the crew and the passengers of the Strathowen could swear to it—and did so, too. The story was printed in the Indian papers when we reached Madras. And you’ve seen one of the beasts yourself, to-day, and know to what an enormous size they grow. There are dangerous monsters in the sea, Mr. Barney; but I reckon there’s nothing worse than a healthy, full-grown devil-fish.”

CHAPTER XIV

In Which a Signal Retards the Race

It was at six bells in the morning watch of the next day that the lookout in the top sang out the wailing cry:

"On deck!"

"Crow's nest, ahoy!" responded Mr. Hollister, who had the deck.

"Sail-oh!"

"Where away?"

"Two points off the weather bow. Four-sticker! It's that blessed Gullwing, by Jiminy Christmas!" responded the sharp-eyed seaman aloft.

There was as much excitement aboard the Seamew now as though this was the first time her sister ship had been spied in the offing. We ran up the shrouds to see her better, and the officers were all on deck with their glasses.

She came snorting up to us on the starboard tack, all her bright canvas bellying, and so trim and taut that it was a pleasure to gaze upon her. I felt a thrill of delight as I watched the Gull-

wing. Aboard of her was my chum, Thankful Polk, and my other friends, and I wished with all my heart that I might rejoin them.

But I knew very well that under the present circumstances that would be impossible. Had the two schooners been becalmed the day before, side by side, I might have got Cap'n Si to put me aboard the Gullwing.

But one thing I did beg the captain of the Seamew to do, and, after some little demur, he agreed to it. He ordered Mr. Barney to bring out the signal flags, kept in the chest amidships, and instructed him to inform Captain Bowditch that the Seamew had picked up, alive, the lost member of his crew.

This signaling was not done until the Gullwing was so near that both ships were about to tack. As soon as the line of flags was run up on the Seamew, they hustled about on the Gullwing and replied. Nor did Captain Bowditch shift his helm at once. The sister ships continued to approach each other.

The Seamew had plainly overtaken the Gullwing, and now, when she sheered off, she would begin to creep ahead of the craft in which I was the more interested. With the wind as it was, and nothing untoward occurring, the Seamew

was bound to gain something over her rival in each leg she made.

"What's he sayin'?" bawled Cap'n Si to Mr. Barney.

I had already learned something about the signal code, and when the second mate's back was turned I got a squint at the codebook. Captain Bowditch was asking if the Seamew would heave to and send me aboard!

"Cap'n Joe is sure cracked!" cackled the commander of the Seamew. "Tell him I wouldn't do it for a hull barrel of greening apples."

I reckon Mr. Barney put the refusal more briefly. But the Gullwing continued to hang in the wind while another line of flags was run up to her fore. The book told me that the signal read: "I'll send boat aboard."

"No he won't, by jinks!" crowed Cap'n Si. "Nor he wouldn't wanten do it if he warn't so blamed short-handed. Stow your flags, Mr. Barney. Stand by. Ready! haul sheet!" and he went ahead and gave swift orders to put the Seamew about on the other tack.

But I was glad that those aboard the Gullwing knew that I was alive. I could imagine Thank's relief, and how surprised and—I hoped—glad, the others would be to know that I had not found my grave in the ocean. I even thought

kindly of Bob Promise, the bully, and believed that he was likewise thinking kindly of me at that moment.

"And to serve Cap'n Si out for not being willing to meet Cap'n Joe half way, and let them take me aboard," I muttered to myself, "I hope the Gullwing beats the Seamew all to flinders!"

The Seamew, however, gained slowly upon her sister ship. On every tack that day she made a better showing. Sometimes the Gullwing was below the horizon; but whenever we sighted her she was dropping back a bit. The wind remained steady and from a favorable quarter and by and by the night dropped down and divided the two ships more effectually than the sea itself.

As the light faded upon sea and sky we sailed under a vast, black-velvet canopy embroidered upon which were the countless stars and planets. Constellations that I knew nothing about glowed from the depths of the firmament; and brighter than all was the Southern Cross. The moon had dipped below the horizon and therefore the Cross and the stars were the more brilliant. I paced the deck alone and thought of my mother, and wondered what she was doing just then, and it Chester Downes was still trying to circumvent me, and Mr. Hounsdictch, and gain control of

the fortune, possession of which he so much begrudged my mother and myself.

And a thought came to me from out the stillness and immensity of that night—a thought that forever after seemed to haunt me; was there not some curse upon my grandfather's huge property, which had been willed my mother and I under such wicked conditions? For that Grandfather Darringford's will had been inspired by hatred of Dr. Webb, my father, one could not doubt.

Had my father not been drowned as he was off White Rock, that will of grandfather's would have been the source of heartburnings in the family. Human nature is human nature; the time would have come when the fact that Dr. Webb was a stumbling-block to his son's advancement, or his wife's ease, would have been advanced. That is, if my father had remained all these years a poor man. And what else could he have been with his practice in Bolderhead?

Men get stunted in small towns—especially professional men. Dr. Webb could never have made much more than a miserably poor living for mother and I had he lived; and all that time the thought of the great Darringford Estate would have been the skeleton in our closet!

It was better as it was, I suppose. It had been a dream that my father was still alive. I believe I would have gladly given up my share of my grandfather's money to have found that the mysterious man aboard the frozen ship was my father! I had been strangely drawn toward that man.

Besides, I felt now as though I were old enough and big enough to make my own way in the world, and to keep my mother in comfort, if not in luxury, as well.

Dawn drew near and the stars began to fade. Soon the deck would be a-bustle with our watch washing down. We had probably crossed and recrossed the way of the Gullwing during the night, but she had not been hailed from the lookout.

As the light of day advanced the wind fell. We hardly made steerage-way in the pearl-colored light of dawn. The coming day is heralded ashore by hundreds of feathered trumpeters; but here on the open sea it advances with silence.

Far, far out on the sea, where the gently swelling water seemed buttoned to the rim of the sky, a sudden flush appeared. The hue lay upon both sky and sea—indeed, it was hard to distinguish for a bit the one element from the

other. But I knew the sun was about to poke his head up just there!

And as the glow grew, a ghostly figure drew across the pink patch. I watched it eagerly. The sun, mist-shrouded and sleepy, was thrust out of the sea; and across the red face of him sailed a four-stick ship—the Gullwing! It did not need the man in the crow's nest to hail the officer of the deck and announce the fact. I could identify our sister ship from where I stood.

Long red rays like pointing fingers played across the sea. The Gullwing and the Seamew were several miles apart. The early rays of the sun touched an object on the sea—at first merely a black spot—lying about equi-distant of the two ships.

When I first saw this black thing I sprang into the shrouds. Mr. Hollister hailed me:

“What do you see, Webb?”

“Something adrift—yonder, sir!”

“Lookout, ahoy!” bawled the mate.

“Aye, aye, sir! I sees it.”

“What d’ye make it out to be?” demanded the mate.

“It’s the black hulk of an open boat,” I cried, as the seaman above hesitated. I expect the rising sun half blinded him. “There’s a stump

of a mast and she seems decked over forward—no! it's an awning."

"A ship's boat?" cried the mate, eagerly.

"Aye, aye, sir!" came down the voice of the man in the top. "That's what she be. And wrecked. Not a sign of life aboard her."

"How is it, Webb?" Mr. Hollister repeated.

"I see nothing moving," I admitted, slowly.

Mr. Hollister sent down for his glass, and then joined me in the shrouds. The deck was all a-bustle by now. Cap'n Si came up, rubbing his eyes and yawning.

"What's the matter with all you lubbers?" was his pleasant demand. "What's that—the Gullwing? Ain't you never seen her before?"

"Drop your eyes a bit, Captain," advised Mr. Hollister, swinging down after a look through his glass.

"Huh!" exclaimed the skipper. "A boat."

"Yes, sir."

"Empty?"

"It looks so," replied Mr. Hollister, and passed him the glass.

"Ain't wuth picking up," decided Cap'n Si, after a long look at the drifting boat.

He closed the glass. Mr. Hollister waved me down and turned to order the watch to work, when the man in the tops hailed again. He was

in a better position to see into the drifting boat than anybody else.

"I see something moving in that boat, sir!"

"What do you see?" bawled Cap'n Si.

"It's something fluttering—a flag, or a rag. There it is!"

There were light airs stirring. Suddenly something upon the broken mast moved. A flaw of wind fluttered something fastened there. Was it a signal of distress? Was some poor creature adrift in the half wrecked boat?

I wondered what Cap'n Si would do. To ignore a flag of distress—to pass by the opportunity of rescuing a fellow-creature from death—would be an awful thing. Yet there might be nobody in the boat. I could see the old man doubted.

And then the lookout hailed again:

"The Gullwing's dropping a boat, sir!"

"That's enough!" roared Cap'n Si, all in a bluster at once. "I won't let Cap'n Joe do more'n me. Mr. Barney!" The second mate had followed him on deck. "Call away a boat's crew."

"Aye, aye, sir!" was the second mate's smart response.

"Beat the Gullwing's boat to that barge. Understand me? You git there first. I ain't

goin' to let Joe Bowditch crow over me in Baltimore. Mebbe the boat's wuth savin' after all."

Before he had ceased speaking Mr. Barney had shouted down the fo'castle hatchway and his watch tumbled up. I had slid down the stays to the deck and was right beside the boat Mr. Barney had elected to launch. I wanted to go in that boat, but I belonged to the mate's watch and knew I would not be selected.

CHAPTER XV

In Which We Have a Good Race In Earnest

And I had an idea that if I asked the captain to go in the boat, or suggested it to Mr. Barney, I'd get an immediate refusal. I had a decided belief that Captain Some didn't wish me to get aboard the Gullwing again. Not that he needed my services particularly—although my work was costing him nothing but my grub and the cast-off clothes I had been given; but Captain Si feared that Captain Joe needed me, and my remaining with the Seamew was crippling his rival. Which, by the way, was likely to be the facts in the case.

So, with this scheme in my mind, I expect I was even more cautious than was necessary. I might have been unnoticed had I jumped right into the boat as it went overboard.

But when I heard Mr. Barney call off the men's names, I noted that Job Perkins was among the chosen. I had sized up Job for what he was. I grabbed him as he passed me on the run and shot into his ear:

"Listen! ten dollars when we reach Baltimore if you'll let me take your place in the boat."

"Huh?" said Job, wonderstruck for a moment. But it was only for a moment. The old fellow had all his wits about him and in working order.

"It's a bargain, boy," he whispered, and the next moment he fell sprawling over a coil of rope and scrambled up again right before Mr. Barney.

"Hullo! what's the matter with you, old man?" demanded the second officer.

"Ow-ouch!" groaned Job, rubbing his arm.

"Hurt you?" snapped Mr. Barney.

"By gravey! I *did* wrench my arm," groaned Job, his face writhing with an expression of pain.

I stepped in at once. "I'll take his place, sir," I said.

"All right!" cried the officer, without a glance, and I slid down the falls and seized the bow oar.

In another moment the officer followed me, getting into the stern, and we cast off.

"You git that boat for me, Mr. Barney!" bawled Cap'n Si, over our heads. "Don't you let them fellers from the Gullwing beat ye."

"We'll do our best," responded Mr. Barney, waving his hand. Then to us he said: "Give

way, men! See what you can do. Bend the ash!"

Before we had left the deck of the Seamew we knew that the Gullwing's boat was off ahead of us. It looked as though the drifting boat was about as far from one vessel as she was from the other. The air being so light, we would have lost time trying to beat down to the spot. The race was between the six-oared boats, and I do not believe any college regatta was ever pulled amid more intense excitement.

At first, however, as we were so low in the water, we could not see our rival. Nor could we scarcely observe the object of our race.

But over these gentle waves we could pull a mighty stroke, and I found that the men with me at the oars were practiced hands. The strokeman set a pace that made us bend our backs in good earnest. This was a race!

Mr. Barney was using a steering oar, and using it well. He stood up to the work, and therefore he could see much farther than we at the oars. By glancing now and then over my left shoulder, however, I could see the black hulk of the drifting boat rising and falling upon the gentle waves.

And at first I saw nothing about the boat to express life saving the fluttering rag. It was a

flag. After some minutes of hard pulling it was revealed to us that it was a British flag, set union down.

As I pulled I saw that Mr. Barney was looking across at some other object than the mysterious black craft. His eyes were squinted up as he gazed into the rising sun, and the expression of his face was mighty grim.

"He sees the Gullwing's boat," I thought.

"Pull, you fellows!" he suddenly barked at us. "Why don't you pull?"

And we *were* pulling. I could stand the pace for a bit longer, I thought; but the stroke was certainly bending his back and driving his oar with a vigor that left little more to be expected from mortal man.

"Pull!" yelled our mate. "Pull, or those lubbers will beat you to it."

There was no feathering of oars, or any fancy work. This was just the hard, deep pull of the deep-sea oarsman. We breathed heavily; the sweat poured from our limbs; we neither spoke nor looked back over our shoulders now. We became veritable pieces of mechanism, set to do this certain stroke, and to do it until we broke down completely!

"Keep it up! Break your backs!" yelled the second mate.

I had an idea that there was an added incentive for Mr. Barney's excitement. His twin brother more than likely commanded the boat from the Gullwing. But we at the oars could not see her yet.

Nearer and nearer we came to the drifting boat. Our craft sprang through the sea at the end of every stroke. Had one of the oars broken I believe we would have been capsized.

Once more I glanced around. Not a sign of life in that floating mystery with its signal floating from the broken mast. But there *was* a bit of canvas spread forward of that mast, like an awning.

Mr. Barney saw me look back and he swore at me good and plenty.

"You want us to lose this race, you sawney!" he exclaimed.

I was convinced that, for his part, he was more anxious to beat the Gullwing's crew—and incidentally his brother—than to save any life there might be remaining on the wreck.

But perhaps I misjudged Mr. Alfred Barney. We were all excited. Even I, who had no reason for wishing to see the Seamew's boat win, pulled my oar with every last ounce of strength I possessed. Mr. Barney had accused me without warrant of trying to throw the race.

The two racing boats were not head on to each other, but were approaching the wreck at an angle that now brought each in sight of the other. When the Gullwing's boat flashed into the range of my eyes I saw half a dozen of the men I knew. There was Thankful Polk, heaven bless him, and Mr. Jim Barney at the steering oar. The sight of them made me feel good all over.

But I could not see the wreck now without twisting my head around. And if I did that I knew I should bring the wrath of our second mate upon me. The Gullwings cheered. For a moment I did not know what for. Could they be winning?

And then Thank's jolly voice reached me across the stretch of sea:

"Hurrray, Clint! Go it, old boy! You're a sight for sore eyes!"

But I had no breath with which to answer. And I reckon if he had been pulling his oar as I was, he would not have been so boisterous.

The strain of the last few minutes of the race was terrific. My breath came in great sobs, and I heard the other men with me groan as they strained at the heavy oars. We were about all in.

"Pull, you tarriers!" barked Mr. Alf Barney again.

"Keep it up, boys!" yelled Mr. Jim Barney in the other boat.

I saw scowling looks exchanged between the twin brothers. It must be true, as Job Perkins had said, the two Barney boys were deadly enemies!

Then suddenly our cox shouted: "In oars! Way all!"

I felt the nose of the boat bump something behind me. I dropped my oar and turned to seize the broken gunwale of the drifting hulk we had pulled so hard to reach. We of the Seamew had won the race.

CHAPTER XVI

In Which I Return to the Gullwing—and With My Arms Full

I hadn't breath enough left at first to answer Thankful Polk's hail. And when my eyes fell upon the contents of the drifting boat that we had pulled so far to reach, what I saw was not calculated to aid me to easy breathing. Lying upon his back, face upwards, in the glare of the morning sun, lay a man, bareheaded and barefooted, dead.

And such an awful death as he must have died! His face was quite black, although he was a white man by nature, it was as though the blood had been congested in his face. His tongue had protruded slightly from between his firm, white teeth. His legs were drawn up as though in a convulsion and the corpse had stiffened that way. His limbs had not been composed by any kindly hand after the spirit had left its body.

He was a sailor. There was tattooing on his chest and arms. He had a short, bushy beard.

I believed at first glance that he was a British seaman. And almost at this first moment of glancing into the boat I made another discovery. I learned how the man had died.

His tongue was not black; and although he was much emaciated, neither thirst nor hunger had hounded the sailor to his dreadful end.

He wore a gully slung by a lanyard around his neck. That knife was twisted tightly in the cord, and the cord itself was imbedded in the flesh of the dead man's throat. Actually a tournequet had been made of the knife and cord, and the sailor had been strangled. He was a horrid sight, as he lay with his feet to the empty stern and his touseled head thrown back over a seat.

Perhaps many of the details of this awful scene were a matter of later observation; but it seems to me now as though everything about the dead man was photographed upon my brain at the first glance.

And then my gaze roved beyond him. There was a piece of sail-cloth laid across the bow of the open boat beyond the stump of the mast. It was dark under that awning. But right at the entrance lay something white and gold.

Without waiting for any order from Mr. Barney, I stood up and leaped into the half

wrecked boat. I heard none of the other men speak a word. All my attention was given to the object which my dazzled eyes now rested upon.

A young girl—the prettiest, most appealing child I had ever seen—lay under the awning. Her head was toward me. Her face was as white as milk, and the blue veins showed plainly at her temples and were traced along her throat. Her cheeks were without an iota of color.

She was all white—her face, her thin, ruffled dress—the bare arm from which the sleeve had been pushed back to her elbow. All white, save the great mass of her hair. That was gold—pure gold. Such a beautiful child I had never imagined before. She was twelve or thirteen years old.

“What’s that you got there, Webb?” I heard Mr. Alf Barney shout.

I had dropped on my knees beside the unconscious girl. I saw that she was only delicate and exhausted. There was a breaker of water lashed to the gunwale right beside her, and a cup with water in it. I saw no food; but I knew well enough that the girl was not dying of thirst. No more than the sailor had died of thirst!

I gathered the girl up in my arms. She was a light weight. I thought she sighed and her eyelids fluttered.

And then suddenly sounded a raucous bellow, in a strange tongue, from within the decked-over portion of the boat. Something moved. I leaped back and almost trod upon the dead man.

Out from under the awning crept a tall, lean, lithe brown man, dressed in torn sailor togs, but with a dirty turban around his head. He was a wild-eyed, yelling fiend. In a moment there flashed out of his dress, from some secret place, a long, glittering blade. With this raised above his head he bounded in his bare feet the length of the boat after me.

At that moment the boat from the Gullwing scraped alongside the wreck. As I whirled to escape this murderer, this boat was nearest to me. Thankful Polk, his red face transfixed with horror, shouted to me:

"Here, Sharp! Quick! This way!"

Their boat was really nearest me. I leaped into it. Thank shoved off with his oar and the boat and the wreck were separated by a growing streak of sea.

The men in both boats all talked at once; and the two Mr. Barneys shouted; but above all the uproar I could hear the frenzied shrieks of the brown man in the turban.

"Come back, here, Webb!" cried the second

officer in the Seamew's boat. "We'll take that child with us."

"Sit down, Clint!" commanded Mr. Jim Barney, quietly. "You'll have us swamped."

I obeyed him quickly. Thank smote me a hearty blow between the shoulders.

"Sharp! you're a daisy! I knowed they couldn't never drown you," he declared.

But I couldn't reply to him. I still held the girl in my arms. There seemed to be no good place there in the stern to lay her down. And she was so frail, and soft, and pretty! I had never seen such a delicate creature before.

We were still moving from the wreck and the Seamew's boat, the men backing water. There was a splash and a louder yell from the Seamew's men. I glanced over my shoulder. I could see the turbaned head of the wild man and his thin, bare arms beating the water. He was swimming desperately after our boat.

"That monkey'll be drowned," Thank cried.

"We kin get away from him easy," said another of the rowers.

"He'll be drowned," I said to Mr. Barney. "We'll have to take him in."

"I reckon that's so, Webb," said the second mate. "The Seamew is welcome to the old tub—and the dead man."

The brown man came to the side of our boat, panting and moaning. He was near spent.

"I believe he belongs to this girl and he thinks we're running off with her," said Mr. Barney.

"He's crazy as he can be," said Thank.

"Help him in. See that he doesn't have that knife. If he doesn't behave, we can lash his wrists together," said Mr. Barney.

The foreign looking man was hauled in. He lay panting on the bottom, between Mr. Barney and I. We were being hailed from the other boat.

"Let that Webb come back with us, you fellows!" cried Mr. Alf Barney. "Cap'n Si will be furious."

"He belongs to the Gullwing," said our Mr. Barney, promptly. "You can't have him."

"We'll see about that—"

"See about it, then," said the officer, shortly. Then to his own crew he said: "Give way, men! Altogether, now."

We swept away on a graceful curve and headed for the Gullwing. Mr. Barney nodded to me with a smile.

"You certainly had a close call for your life, Clint," he said. "Luck was with you when you went overboard from the Gullwing, after all. Everybody gave you up for lost—save

Thank there. He swore that if you went to the bottom you could walk ashore, somehow."

At that moment the brown man drew a longer breath and struggled to his knees. Mr. Barney reached forward to seize him; but I saw that the foreigner's eyes glowed no longer with the wild light that had made him look so savage.

"Sahib," he said softly, "is Her Innocence safe? Is the Missee unharmed? Is it well with her?"

I looked down at the child's face. She was breathing quietly, but her eyes were still closed.

"She is asleep. She does not seem to be harmed," I said.

"Sahib! I was overcome. I had watched so long. Two long weeks have we been in that boat. Water we had, but little food. That food I had brought myself for Missee. One man become touched of the finger of the gods and leaped overboard. The other desired the fragments of food which only remained for Her Innocence. I felt myself fast losing the thread of life. Then—the other man died."

I knew what he meant. I understood how that man had been strangled by the lanyard around his neck that the food might be saved for the girl. I guess this strange man was pretty nearly a savage; but I believed then—

and I believe now—that he had done right.

“I—Dao Singh—then fell asleep, Sahib. I believed it was to be my last sleep. But the Missee had her food and the water.”

“I see,” I said, for he spoke only to me, even ignoring Mr. Barney. “Now you will both be saved. Our ship is at hand.”

“It is well, Sahib,” he sighed. “Dao Singh—is the Sahib’s—servant—”

He fell back into the bottom of the boat and his eyes closed. I feared he had died then and there; but Mr. Barney bent over him, opened his shirt, felt of his heart, and then nodded to me with encouragement.

“He’s asleep,” he said. “Just done up—plucky brown devil. A Hindoo, I take it. These folks were from a British ship; but that boat had no name on her.”

Half an hour later we pulled under the Gull-wing’s rail. All hands were there to eagerly welcome us. We caught the falls and they hauled us up to the davits, heavy as the boat-load was.

As we swung inboard I leaped down to the deck, still bearing the unconscious girl in my arms.

CHAPTER XVII

In Which We Learn the Particulars of the Wreck of the Galland

Captain Joe Bowditch smiled down broadly at me from the poop as I leaped to the deck; but when he saw the burden in my arms his countenance changed queerly.

"What in the name o' goodness you got there?" he barked.

"A little girl, Captain Bowditch," I replied.

"A little—well! what d'ye think o' that?" he gasped, waddling down the ladder. "Ye didn't git that aboard the Seamew? Nor out o' the ocean when ye went overboard, neither?"

"No, sir," said Mr. Barney, who had followed me. "She is what we found in that drifting boat—part of what we found, at least."

"A gal! Moses ter Moses, and all hands around!" groaned the captain. "Whatever will we do with a gal aboard the Gullwing?"

"I don't see how we could have left her there, Captain," laughed Mr. Barney.

"Now, don't ye cackle!" snapped the old man.

"Why didn't you leave her for Cap'n Si? He's a man that's more used to female children than I be. Why, Cap'n Si's sister married a man whose brother got spliced to a widder woman that had twin gal babies. He's more fitten to take such a responsibility than what I be."

He looked as though he thought he had proved his case, too. But I was too much worried over the condition of the pretty creature in my arms to pay much attention to his growling.

And when the Hindoo was brought inboard, Captain Joe went off into another fit. "Holy smoke!" he yelled. "Another useless critter to feed. Didn't you leave nothin' in that boat for the Seamew?"

"We left a dead man," chuckled one of the men.

"Well—we could have buried him easy," grunted the old man. "Take that nigger below and find out what seems to be the matter with him."

But his bark was a whole lot worse than his bite. He hurried away to open the spare cabin for the girl, and I followed him into the after house, still bearing her in my arms.

Mr. Bates, who had the deck, came to look down upon her pretty, white face as I started below.

"Bless her!" he murmured. "Have a care with her, Clint. Glad to see you again, boy. Ah! that pretty one ought to bring us luck, sure enough."

"Come right this way, boy, and lay her in the bed," ordered Captain Bowditch. "My! she looks bad—but pretty! Sh! is she asleep?"

And then the trembling lids, with their long golden lashes, opened slowly. With her complexion and hair, I had expected to look into blue eyes. But I was astonished to find that the little creature's orbs were a beautiful, deep, deep brown, with golden sparks in their depths. My face was so close to hers at the moment her lids parted that I could see the reflection of my own countenance in the pupils.

"My soul!" murmured Captain Joe, looking over my shoulder, "she's jest the prettiest thing I ever see."

Her wan face changed slowly. A faint color was breathed over it. She gazed steadily into my countenance, and it was evident that I did not frighten her. She put up one hand and touched my cheek. I tell you, the touch thrilled me!

Then her eyes closed again, she sank deeper into the pillow, and was again asleep.

"Here, boy!" croaked the master of the Gull-

wing, trying to speak softly. "You run and tell the doctor to kill a chicken and make some broth—strong broth, now. Don't want no 'phantom soup'—suthin' that tastes like a chicken did more than wade through a gallon of water on stilts. If he don't make it good I'll be in his wool!"

I ran to do his bidding. I knew very well that the little girl would have the very best of everything there was upon the big schooner.

In the dog watch I held a regular reception. The men were eager to hear the story of my adventure overboard, and old Tom Thornton declared I might live to be "a second Methuserlum" and never experience a closer call than that. Old Stronson shook his head.

"De poy iss fey," he muttered, shaking his head.

"He's sure a lucky youngster," declared Bob Promise. "No wonder he got the best of me when we had our set-to."

Thank and I had much to talk over. I know my chum had suffered in spirit when it seemed that I was drowned. He never would admit to the others that he had given up hope of seeing me again. Now he clung close around me and did not seem to want to let me out of his sight—

not even long enough for me to go down to take a look at Dao Singh.

"Let that Jasper be, Sharp," Thank drawled. "You can't kill a nigger easy—sleep won't hurt him. If he was pretty near two weeks on watch in that boat, no wonder he's all in."

"He is a faithful creature," I said. "And he must love his mistress."

"That Jasper's taken a fancy to you, too," Thank said. "You're 'it' with him."

I did not realize at the time how very right Thank was, and what it meant to be canyonized by Dao Singh.

The report came forward that the little girl had taken some of the broth the cook had made, was seemingly satisfied with her surroundings, and had gone to sleep again. Mr. Barney told me that Cap'n Bowditch was peeking in at her every hour or so, and that it was plain the old man was prepared to get down on the deck and let his little visitor walk on him—if she so desired.

But in the morning watch they called me and I found that the girl wanted to go up on deck, but had asked to be lifted by the boy who had taken her from the wrecked boat. She remembered me, then! And I had not really supposed she had seen me until after I had lain her

down in the berth and she had opened her eyes.

She had had some breakfast. There was a little flush in her face. She looked much brighter, and when she saw me she smiled delightfully.

"I know your face!" she said, and although her voice was weak, it was as sweet as a tinkling silver bell. "I was sure I could not be mistaken."

"Mistaken?" I asked, puzzled.

"Yes. You were the boy I saw before—oh, long, long before I came here."

That puzzled me, and I suppose my face must have shown my surprise. She laughed—a pretty, resonant chime. I fell for that voice of hers!

And then what she said about seeing me so long before got me going, too.

"Say, you never saw me before I got you out of that boat," I declared.

"Oh, yes, I did," she returned, confidently. "I haven't been aboard this big ship long, have I?"

"Only since yesterday," I admitted.

"That is what the nice captain told me," she returned, as though satisfied.

"Then you've seen me just once before. When I brought you below yesterday."

"But you took me out of the boat?"

"Yes."

"And held me all the time we were getting here?"

"Yes, ma'am!"

"I knew it," she breathed, smiling up into my face again. "I knew it couldn't be all just a dream."

The captain had fixed a chair himself, with blankets and the like, in the shade of the after house. There I laid her down and then, having no further orders, would have gone forward to my own place. But she clung to my hand.

"You sit down here on the deck beside me, tell me your name, and all about you," she said. "For although I saw you so long ago, I never learned who you were."

I looked up at Mr. Gates and the Captain and slyly tapped my forehead. I believed she was lightheaded. The old man nodded and said, gruffly enough, for he was deeply moved:

"You stay with her, Clint. Do jest what she wants ye to."

"Clint?" she repeated, questioningly. "Is that your name?"

"Clinton Webb," I replied.

"Clinton is pretty. You are English?"

"I should say not!" I exclaimed. "American."

"Oh, yes! I am an English girl; but I have lived in British India most all my life."

"That's it, Miss," I said, knowing that the captain and mate were dying to hear her story. "You tell us all about it. How did you come in that boat? And what vessel was it that was wrecked?"

"We sailed in the Galland, a big steamship, from Calcutta," said the girl softly. "I was with friends. They were taking me home—'home' means England to all British India people who are white."

"Then you were going to relatives?"

"I do not know. I am not sure. My father had some people—*once*. But they treated him unkindly, I believe. He had not heard from them for years. My father was Captain Erskin Duane. He died very, very suddenly. My mother had been a long time dead," and the tears now began to fill her eyes and creep down her pale cheeks.

"Friends who were about to go to England took me on the Galland with them. These were Mr. Suffix, and Mr. and Mrs. Traine, and Cecelia Traverstone."

"Were they saved?" asked Mr. Gates, quietly.

"I do not know. I think not. I think the steamer's boilers blew up and smashed most of

the boats and liferafts, so that few were saved," said the girl, simply.

"You poor child!" breathed Captain Bowditch, blowing his nose right afterward like a fog siren.

"I am Phillis Duane," she said, after a moment. "I traveled with my *ayer* and Dao Singh, who would not leave me when father died. He had always served the captain. We lived up country from Calcutta. I do not think that my father was very well acquainted with the people I sailed with, after all. I was alone, and they were just kind to me."

"And you don't know what you were going to do when you reached England—whom you would meet?" queried Mr. Gates, gravely.

"No. It was all in the hands of my friends," she said, shaking her head. "And I am quite sure they never got away from the Galland. I would not, had it not been for Dao Singh."

"That nigger, eh?" grunted the captain.

"He is a Hindoo. He is a very intelligent man in his own language and among his own people. I have heard my father say so. I fear he sacrificed his caste by attending on the captain—and on me."

"But he saved you from the wreck?" I urged, keeping her to the story of the wreck.

“Yes. When the boilers blew up (the steamship had been afire all night) Dao Singh ran into the cabin and hurried my *ayer* and me out on the deck. Some men were lowering a boat. It was damaged some.

“Singh tried to put the *ayer* and me in it. But I believe she must have fallen overboard, or been pushed overboard. There was much confusion. I was scared and cried. When I understood a little better about matters, we were in the boat, drifting without oars, and the Galland, all a mass of flames, seemed to be going down, stern-foremost, under the sea.”

CHAPTER XVIII

In Which I Become Better Acquainted With Phillis Duane

There was little more to be learned, it seemed, about the actual tragedy of the burned steamship. How the fire had been started she could not say. She had been asleep. Her nurse, or *ayer* awoke her at the height of the stampede of passengers for the deck. Whether the officers and bulk of the crew had been killed by the explosion, or had abandoned the ship and her human freight, she did not know.

The Galland had been some months on the voyage, having circumnavigated the world, when Phillis Duane and her friends boarded her at Calcutta. She had touched at Chinese ports, and again at Tahiti. She was a British tramp steamship and Phillis seemed to think that her home port was Edinburgh. It might be that the lost girl's friends were Scotch, and that the friends she traveled with were likewise Scotch, and that is why they had selected the ill-fated Galland to get home on.

"Do you suppose that nigger knows?" demanded Captain Bowditch, of Mr. Gates, in a whisper.

"Doubtful if you get anything out of him," returned the mate.

"Understands English, doesn't he?" growled the skipper.

"And speaks it. But these Hindoo servants don't really know anything about the English sahibs they serve. The Britisher governs India in a boiled shirt and evening clothes. He is about as human to the natives as one of their own cast-iron gods. That's how Johnny Bull has been able to boss the several million of blood-thirsty inhabitants of his colonies. No. The nigger wouldn't be likely to know anything."

"But why did he follow the girl to wait on her, then, Mr. Gates?" I asked.

"Because he's a nigger—an inferior tribe. That's the nature of 'em."

I did not believe it. I had never read that the people of Hindoostan were particularly inferior to the whites. And Dao Singh looked to me as though he knew a whole lot more than the ordinary European. I was mistaken if he was not the best educated person aboard the Gull-wing at that moment!

But it might be that the Hindoo knew nothing

of the cause of the wreck and of what had become of her other passengers and the crew. Unless some other boats had been picked up from the lost Galland, her case was likely to be another of those unexplained tragedies of the deep which fill the columns of our newspapers for a few issues and then are forgotten—so easily forgotten!

The officers and I had held the brief conversation noted above when we had withdrawn out of earshot of the little girl. The cook had brought her a beaten egg to drink as a “pick-me-up” between breakfast and dinner. When she had finished it she looked around for me again.

“Go on, boy,” said the captain. “Keep her amused. Poor little thing.”

“And encourage her to talk with you, Clint,” advised Mr. Gates. “Put what she says down in your log. If you do that, you may gradually get together a connected story of what and who she is. Such information will be valuable in aiding her to find her friends.”

I thought well of that idea, and promised to do so; though I wondered how the mate knew I kept a log. I had taken notes of my adventures ever since I had been blown out to sea on my little sloop, the Wavecrest; but at this time I did not know what an aid to memory a log—or

diary—would be. By the way, a seaman never calls it “logbook;” the daybook of a ship at sea is merely a “log.” One of the most popular magazines published has a correspondence department called “The Logbook,” and that makes the sailor smile!

I had no objection to being attentive to our little passenger. I judged her to be a mighty plucky little girl. Of course, her father had been dead long enough for the first of her grief to have been assuaged before she had sailed from India. And the friends she had sailed with had won her heart; therefore she had not loved them enough to miss them much now.

She had endured privations in the drifting boat remarkably well. She told me of the man that had gone crazy and leaped overboard. She did not seem to know that the men aboard the boat with her had had no food. I began to have a remarkably high opinion of Dao Singh. Yet I knew very well that he had strangled the man I had found dead in the boat and had been unable to throw the heavy body overboard.

There's a vast difference between the negro race and the Hindoo, I thought, remembering Mr. Gates' words, “This Dao Singh is a remarkable man, or *I* am much mistaken.”

Mr. Barney came along and spoke to the little

one, and she seemed to like him—as I had—at first sight. Afterward the young second mate talked a little in private with me.

“Mr. Robbins says she takes to you and is willing to talk with you, Webb.”

“Yes, sir.”

“And you’re trying to draw out from her her history?”

“I am, sir.”

“It’s a good idea. There may be some difficulty in getting trace of her friends.”

“Well, she sha’n’t suffer, if her friends don’t turn up,” I said, with emphasis. “My mother is rich and she will be glad to take Phillis herself, I have no doubt.”

“That’s a good thing, too,” said Mr. Barney, heartily. “But you understand, my lad, that there may be friends expecting the girl in the Old Country, that she knows nothing about. We shall have to report the case to the British consul at Baltimore, and he will look up her folks—if she has any. In case there should be none, somebody might have to step in to save the child from being sent to an institution—in England, I presume. They would scarcely send her back to India.”

“Not much, sir!” I exclaimed. “They will

have to show pretty good grounds for taking her from mother——”

“Why, you don’t know whether your mother will take her or not,” laughed Mr. Barney.

“Yes she will,” I assured him. “She’d love to have a girl like Phillis.”

And I had no fear on that score. Mother couldn’t help but fall in love with such a dear little thing as Phillis Duane. I was glad to see that Phillis seemed fond of me, too. I had never had a sister, and it struck me just then that a sister was what I had missed all my life!

We were getting on fine together and she was chattering to me just as though she had known me for years, when I spied a figure coming waveringly down the deck from the forward house.

“It’s poor Dao Singh!” exclaimed Phillis. And then she called to him in her sweet voice; but what she said none of us could understand as it was in his own tongue.

He glided rather than walked along the deck. Somehow he had obtained clean garments; and he had washed his turban. Altogether he looked very neat and trim. But he was very weak and cadaverous. That Hindoo had come pretty near starving to death, and no mistake.

When he had spoken to the girl in reply, bow-

ing low before her, he turned quickly to me. I was not only astonished, but I felt mighty foolish when he dropped gracefully on his knees and touched the deck lightly with his forehead right at my feet.

"Dao Singh is the servant of Webb Sahib," he said, softly.

"For the love of Mike, get up!" I gasped, and I heard Thankful Polk giggling behind me, while Mr. Barney laughed outright. "You don't want to kneel to *me*."

Singh arose and stood, with dignity, before me.

"Webb Sahib has but to command," he said, quietly. "He is the friend and protector of Her Innocence," indicating Phillis with a scarcely perceptible gesture. "His word is law to Dao Singh."

"All right, if that is so," I said, glad that he had spoken too low for anybody else to hear. "If my word's law, just you treat me with a little less deference. I'm only a man before the mast on this ship, and it won't do to be kowtowing to me and treating me as you do the Memsahib. That's all right for *her*, Dao Singh; but I'm not used to it."

"It is as the Sahib pleases," he replied, gravely. "He has but to command."

I began to wonder if a Hindoo, who was so enthusiastically my friend, might not prove to be something of a nuisance in the end!

CHAPTER XIX

In Which I Learn Something More About the Barney Twins

The captain allowed Singh to wait upon his "Missees" to his heart's content, and I heard the two mates laughing over the fact that the Hindoo insisted upon acting as steward and waiting upon the Captain Sahib at table. The Old Man wasn't used to having a man standing behind his chair at meals and it near took his appetite away at first. But Phillis being in the cabin and soon taking her meals at the first table, pleased the officers immensely, I could see.

Forward, Singh was forever trying to do little things for me, and learning that I thought a good deal of Thankful Polk, the Hindoo included my chum in his voluntary services. He looked over our clothes and mended them, and insisted upon doing our washing.

"That Jasper is just as handy as any house-broke nigger I ever saw," declared Thank. "My folks owned slaves before the war; but I

don't know but being waited on by one is going to be too rich for my blood."

Thank saw no difference between a Hindoo and a Negro; anything off color was a "Jasper" to him. But it tickled him when Singh called him "Polk Sahib." With the other hands he was never familiar; but nobody save Bob Promise treated him unkindly. Bob was a bully, and that mean streak in him was bound to show on the surface every once in awhile.

Meantime the old Gullwing was snoring away up the coast of South America. Not that the land was in sight, for we were miles and miles off shore; but the course she followed was parallel to the coast. The Seamew was not sighted for days at a stretch, and we did not know whether she was ahead of us or astern. I had an idea, however, that during the favorable weather she was walking away from us at a pretty lively gait.

Since I had returned from my sojourn aboard the Seamew I thought that Mr. Barney treated me differently. That is, when we were off duty and chance threw us together. Before my accident I had put on the gloves with him on several occasions, and he had been kind enough to say that I was as good a sparring partner as he had ever had. We took up this exercise again, as the weather remained so favorable.

He was curious about the attitude of the Seamew's company toward us, and whether they were as eager to win the race to Baltimore as were the men aboard the Gullwing.

"More so," I told him. "They mean to beat us if they can—from Cap'n Somes all down the line."

He threw off the gloves and said, with a side glance at me:

"My brother, too?"

"Yes, *sir*."

"Just as eager as the others?"

"Just as eager, *sir*."

He was silent a moment, as I got into my shirt, and then he shot at me:

"What did you think of my brother, Alf Webb?"

I was rather taken aback for a moment. Then I saw that he expected a straight answer and I did not like to say that I did not like Mr. Alf as well as I did him. So I stammered:

"I—I thought there was something troubling Mr. Alfred's mind."

"Aye?" returned Mr. Barney, cocking his eye. "There's something troubling both our minds, I reckon." And then, after a moment's silence, he asked: "Will the Seamew beat us, Webb?"

"I hope not!" I cried. "But the spirit among the crew of the Seamew is different from ours. Cap'n Somes would take any advantage he could to beat us; so would Mr. Hollister and—and——"

"And my brother?"

"I—I am afraid so. That is the way it impressed me," I admitted.

"Alf didn't use to be like that," said Mr. Barney, gravely. "But he and I have been at outs for some time. It's a bad, bad affair," he added, more to himself than to me. "And it's Uncle Jothan's fault. Confound that old man, anyway!" he completed, with a good deal of emphasis.

Then it was just as Job Perkins had told me! The rivalry between the Barney twins was fostered by their rich uncle. I had no comment to make—it wasn't my place. But Mr. Barney seemed to wish to talk to somebody, and perhaps because I was so near his own age (he could not have been twenty-three yet) and came from people who were more like his own class, he warmed toward me for the moment. Perhaps, too, I am a sympathetic listener.

"Alf and I," said Mr. Barney, thoughtfully, "have always been more than brothers. We've been *friends*. There's a difference. We under-

stand each other fully—or always have until now. I never had any other chum, nor did he. We have been just as close to each other all our lives as the day we were born.

“I guess we had to be,” he added, thoughtfully. “There wasn’t anybody else for us to get close to. Our mother died soon after we were born. Father was lost in that old leaky bucket belonging to the firm, the Timothy K.—named after T. K. Knight, who used to be head of Barney, Blakesley & Knight before Uncle Jothan worked up in the firm.

“And that’s what makes the old man so crazy now. He wants a Barney to take his place so that another Knight won’t boss things. He’s nutty on it—that’s what he is!

“Uncle Jothan has had the care of us since we were small, you see. It’s nothing to his credit, however. Father left some property—sufficient to give Alf and me our education and set us out into the world with a little something to rattle in our pants’ pockets besides a bunch of keys!

“Old Uncle Jothan tried to set us boys at each other long ago. He tried his best to set one off against the other—to make Alf sore on me, or me sore on Alf. We didn’t see what he was getting at, at first.

"But he didn't succeed very well. He made his favor, and his money, and his influence an object for us to struggle for. As it happened, we just wouldn't struggle. We would not be rivals. What one had, t'other had. And that satisfied us—until last year," and Mr. Barney shook his head dolefully.

"When we got our tickets the old man was crazy to find out if one of us passed better than another. We were about equal, I reckon. What one knows about seamanship, the other knows. In navigation I'm sure we stood equal.

"That didn't satisfy Uncle Jothan. The last day we saw Baltimore he had us to breakfast with him. He was more ornery that morning than ever before.

" 'You two boys make me sick!' he said to us. 'I believe you try your blamedest to keep even in everything.'

" 'And what if we do?' I asked him. 'Ain't that as it should be? We're twins.'

" 'You're a pair of twin fools,' says he, with his usual politeness. 'One of you don't know which side of his slice of bread the butter's on.'

"I looked at mine. 'The top side,' I says, 'so far,' and Alf laughed.

" 'And you'll find it butter side down, if you don't have a care,' snarled Uncle Jothan.

‘I got about tired of waiting for one of you to show some sense. I tell you there’s only room for one of you in the firm, and that one is going to handle my money. The other is going to be a poor man all his life.’

“ ‘Which one’s going to be poor, and which one rich?’ Alf asked him.

“ ‘You might as well tell us which will be rich, Uncle,’ I said, laughing. ‘For if it’s Alf, then I can begin to borrow from him right now.’

“ ‘That’s right,’ says Brother Alf. ‘What’s mine is yours.’

“That really made the old man mad, I expect. He pretty near gnashed his teeth.

“I believe I’ve got a pair of totally condemned fools for nephews!’ he yelled, only he put it even stronger.

“Oh, he was mad! I saw that we’d gone too far with him.

“ ‘Never mind, Uncle,’ I said, soothingly. ‘We’ll both do our best for you——’

“ ‘And your “best” will be just exactly alike,’ he cried. ‘When you get your mate’s tickets it will be the same, and in the end I’ll have a couple of masters of windjammers as near alike as old Somes and Bowditch. What one can do the other can do. Ye stood just the

same in your books at school, and you stand just the same in your rating at sea.'

"I expect the old man was pretty well heated up. But we just laughed as though it was a joke.

" 'I tell you what,' says he, pushing back his chair. 'You sha'n't fool me no more. One of you is going to take his place in the firm at the end of this v'yge you are beginning. One of you will win and the other will lose. And I'll never let a penny of my money get into the hands of the fellow that loses.'

"Oh, he was quite in earnest, we could see. Alf looked at me and shook his head. It was past laughing at.

" 'The Gullwing and the Seamew,' says uncle, 'are putting to sea on the same day. They will practically make the same voyage. Now listen to me! Whichever of you boys steps ashore at Baltimore at the end of the voyage, that boy will be my heir, and the other sha'n't have a cent. Now, that's final. One of you has got to win, whether you want to, or not. I'll settle it myself.'

"And with that he walked off and left us, too mad to even bid us goodbye," said Mr. Barney.

CHAPTER XX

In Which Phillis Tells Me of Her Dream

I thought Mr. Barney had finished his story, he was so long silent. I saw, however, that he was still thinking of his brother, and I was not sure whether he was expecting a word of sympathy, or not. I reckoned he had been talking more to relieve his mind than for any other purpose. And finally he went on with it:

“Alf and I talked it over as we walked down to the docks. I told him I was sick of Uncle Jothan’s nagging. I wished he’d pick the one he wanted and close the discussion. I believed the price we’d have to pay for his money was too great, anyway.

“‘But money’s a good thing,’ says Alf. ‘And Uncle Jothan has got a good deal of it.’

“‘I believe too much money spoils folks, Alf,’ says I.

“‘We could stand some spoiling,’ he returns, laughing.

“‘Look at uncle himself,’ says I. ‘He’s spoiled.’

" 'I'm not afraid of being spoiled by it,' says Alf.

" 'I believe it would hurt you as quick as anybody,' I told him. And that riled him, though I had no thought that it would.

" 'Speak for yourself, Jim,' says he. 'Money's worth going after.'

" 'We've had everything equal so far, Alf,' says I. 'I'm not hungry for his money.'

" 'And I suppose you think I am?' and then I saw he *was* miffed.

" 'The one that tries to get the best of the other for the sake of Uncle Jothan's money, will show he's hungry,' I said.

" 'Then call it what you like, Jim!' he cries. 'I'm going after it.'

" 'How?' says I.

" 'I'm going to beat you back to Baltimore,' says he.

" 'I'll be hard to beat,' I told him.

" 'Wait and see!' cried Alf, and with that he flung off from me and went his way to the Seamew alone.

"I had to do an errand. When I got aboard the Gullwing the two schooners were just about to pull out. It was then old Cap'n Si made his bet with Cap'n Joe. I believe Alf put him up to it. When I saw Alf in Buenos Ayres I told

him so, and he didn't deny it," said Mr. Barney, sorrowfully.

"When we met in the other ports we had words. I'm blamed sorry now, but it's too late to patch it up. I'll tell you honest, Webb, I don't care who gets Uncle Jothan's money and the job with the firm; but I'm going to not let Alf beat me to Baltimore if I can help it."

He went aft then without another word; but I did a good deal of thinking about the friction between the two Barneys. Privately I liked Mr. Jim Barney the better of the two; but it was a wicked shame that the head of Barney, Blakesley & Knight should have set the twins by their ears in this way. Money was at the root of the trouble. Mr. Jothan Barney seemed about to devote his wealth to as bad a cause as my grandfather had tried to devote *his* property.

The Gullwing struck a streak of headwinds soon after this and we wallowed along without making much headway. That made us all feel pretty sure. It was a chance that the Seamew might have forged so far ahead of us that she had excaped these contrary winds entirely.

Captain Bowditch was on deck almost all the time. His better seamanship began to be displayed now. He took advantage of every flaw in the wind. He had us making sail, and reefing

down, most of the time, and Bob Promise grumbled that we topmen had better stay up there in the rigging all the time, and have our meals brought to us by the cook.

We saw nothing of the Seamew, and that added to our anxiety, too. Days passed and we crossed the line, under the heat of a tropical sun that fairly stewed the pitch out of the deck planks. Dao Singh seemed the only person aboard that accepted the heat with good temper.

We rigged an awning for our passenger, and Phillis lived under it both day and night. She was getting plump and hearty, however; surely the voyage was doing her no harm. And she was the sweetest tempered, jolliest little thing one could imagine. It cheered a fellow up and made him ashamed to be grouchy, just to be near her.

She liked Thankful Polk, and he amused her by the hour. The officers were pretty easy on Thank and I as long as we were with her. To me she clung as though I really was her brother—and I was proud that she so favored me.

Phillis told me much of her life in India—as far back as she could remember it. She had come out from England when she was very small. On her last birthday she had been twelve. But little that she could tell me would

help in finding her relatives—if she had any.

Her father, Captain Erskin Duane, had not been in active service. Not as far as she knew, at least. He had been an invalid for months; but had died very suddenly. There seemed to have been few army friends, and the people she had sailed with from Calcutta she had hardly ever seen before the captain's death.

I had tried pumping Dao Singh about the private history of the little girl; but either he knew nothing about the captain's affairs, or he would not tell me. He was as simple, apparently, as a child about his own expectations. He had insisted upon accompanying the little Memsahib in her voyage "because she needed him." *Why* he thought she needed him he could not, or would not, explain.

For my part I told Phillis everything about myself, and recounted, from time to time, all the adventures through which I had been since leaving Bolderhead. I told her much about my mother, too, and about Darringford House, and our summer home on Bolderhead Neck.

I assured her that I should take her at once to my mother when we landed and that I knew my mother would be delighted to give her a home with us. This seemed to please the little girl greatly.

"Then we shall really be brother and sister, sha'n't we?" she cried.

"Of course," I said.

"That will be splended! For, do you know, Clinton, I think you are the very nicest brother I could have picked out. You are just as nice as I dreamed you would be."

"There!" said I. "You have said that before. How do you mean, that you *dreamed* about me?"

"So I did. Only it was a dream that came true."

"You mean that you dreamed of me when you were aboard that boat?"

"Oh, no! it was long before that. It was soon after we left Calcutta that I saw you," she said, confidently.

"Why, Philly!" I exclaimed. "That's impossible, you know."

"But I *did* dream about you," she returned, seriously. "I knew that I was in a little boat. I thought I was all alone on the great ocean. And I was frightened, and sick—just as I *was* frightened and sick when the time came. But you came to me, and told me you would save me, and you held me in your arms just as you *did* hold me afterward all the way to this ship."

She was so positive that she had dreamed it all before, that I saw it was no use to gainsay it.

And then, why should I contradict her? Perhaps she had had some secret and wonderful assurance that she would be saved from the wreck. I did not understand the clarivoyant part of it, or whatever it might be; so I did not touch upon the subject again.

It was after that that the great gale struck us and the staunch Gullwing was battered continually for a week. We ran almost under bare poles for a time, and fortunately the gale favored us. But we lost our mizzen topmast completely and some of our other rigging was wrecked.

Phillis had to remain below during this storm, and she was sick again. She cried so for me that the captain—kind old man that he was—let me go down to her whenever I could be spared from the deck. The child seemed to feel that she was perfectly safe if I was with her.

Her constant trust in me made a strong impression upon my mind. Nor was it an unpleasant impression. Nobody had ever leaned before on me as this child did—not even my mother. It made me feel more manly and put me on my very best behavior.

CHAPTER XXI

In Which the Sister Ships Once More Race Neck to Neck

That gale hit the Gullwing harder than any blow she had been through (so Mr. Barney said) since she had left Baltimore. We could not do much toward making repairs until the gale had blown out; we only cleared away the wreckage aloft, reefed everything snug, and let her drive.

Captain Bowditch worried like an old hen with a mess of ducklings. I don't know when the old man slept. He was on deck every moment of his own watch, and I could hear him often roaring orders during our watch below.

This was the time when the fact that the Gullwing was shorthanded made the crew groan. It was up and down at all hours for us. If there was a lull in the gale we were yanked out and sent aloft to risk an inch more canvas. Cap'n Joe coaxed her along every chance he saw. The thought of getting ahead of the Seamew obsessed the Old Man's mind while he *was* awake, that was sure!

We discussed our chances forward with much eagerness, too. The Seamew had left us behind during the fair weather; we could make up our minds to that. But now we had a better chance. The Gullwing was better worked, short of hands as she was, than the Seamew.

I remembered vividly how Cap'n Si Some's hopped about, and bawled orders, and seemed to get in his own way when a squall came up, or the weather was unfavorable. He was a more nervous man than our skipper; and, I believed, he was nowhere near so good a seaman. At least, I had got that idea in my head, and comparing the actions of the two skippers in a squall, I guessed any unprejudiced person would have accepted my view as correct.

We came out of this blow at last, fair weather returned, and Phillis had her awning re-rigged, and was able to come on deck again, although the Atlantic billows were tumbling heavily.

All hands were busy on the new rigging. The captain had got up a spare spar and Old Tom Thornton and Stronson, went to work on that. The captain was determined to get up a new mizzen topmast and bend on new sails. Every square inch of canvas spread to the favoring breeze would aid us in the race home.

We had gotten now into the greatest ocean

current in the world—the Gulf Stream. Ocean currents are mysterious phenomena. The source of energy required to set and keep the vast masses of water in motion has been productive of endless discussion.

Temperature, barometric pressure, attractive force of the moon, have all been advanced as bringing about ocean currents. Seamen believe that it is the wind that brings about certain oceanic movements. But the winds do not explain the reason entirely—not even in any single case. As to the direct action of the wind on the surface of the sea alone, it has been shown that with a wind blowing at twenty-five miles an hour the surface water would have a movement of not more than fifteen miles in the twenty-four hours! The Gulf Stream is the greatest of the Atlantic currents, if not the greatest current on the wet portion of the globe. It is really a wonderful river—a river flowing through an ocean. Its temperature is different from the surrounding waters, it is of a different color, and the edge of it can be noted almost exactly wherever a ship crosses into or out of the Gulf Stream.

This warm current starts between the coast of Cuba and the Florida reefs, and certainly with this mighty current the wind has absolutely nothing to do. The force of the current is at

its maximum strength when it emerges from the Bemini Straits, between the Bahama Bank on the east and the coast of Florida on the West. Between Fowey Rocks and Gun Gay Light the average depth of the Gulf Stream is 239 fathoms, and it runs at a speed of fifty miles in the twenty-four hours. Occasionally, under particular circumstances, it will speed up to a hundred miles in the twenty-four hours. Little wonder that homeward bound windjammers are glad to strike the Gulf Stream. After we crossed into the clear azure of that current there was a steady tug on the Gullwing's prow.

"The women-folks are pullin' her home with their apron strings," chuckled Captain Bowditch.

I rigged fishing tackle for Phillis and she caught some of the smaller fish of the Gulf Stream—fish which cannot be caught in the waters even a short distance outside of the line of the current. They were brilliant trunk-fish, and angel-fish, and the like; not edible, but interesting to look at.

Shark were plentiful, too, and followed the ship like dogs, to fight for the scraps the cook flung overboard. Thank got a big hook and about a pound of fat pork (he could wheedle

anything out of the black cook) bent on a strong line, and we trolled for shark.

We caught one about eight foot long; he was an ugly beast, and fought like a tiger when we got him onto the deck. He would snap at a broomstick and bite it through as neatly as we could have cut it with an axe. A sailor hates a shark just as the ordinary man ashore dislikes a snake.

"I tell you what we'll do with him," said Bob Promise, chuckling. "I seen it done on the old Beatrix two years ago. We 'belled the cat' with an old he shark, and it's an all right trick tu play on the dirty critters."

"How d'ye do it?" asked Tom Thornton.

"Lemme have that broken broomstick," said Bob, grabbing it. "Now watch—when he snaps at me."

The huge fish, lying on its side, with its wicked eye watchful of us all, opened wide his jaws when Bob Promise approached. The bully was a reckless fellow, and as the shark snapped open his jaws he thrust his hand and arm into the cavity and thrust the stick upright, far back in the beast's throat.

Thank actually screamed aloud, and I felt sick—I thought sure the foolish fellow's arm would be snapped off between the closing jaws.

But the shark couldn't close his jaws! That was the trick of it. The stick was thrust upright, sticking into the roof of the great mouth and into the root of the tongue. The fish was "belled" indeed.

There it writhed upon the deck, thrashing its strong tail about, its wicked eyes rolling, and evidently in awful agony.

"Now pitch him overboard," laughed Bob Promise. "He'll live some time that way—mebbe till he starves to death or until some of the smaller fish pitch upon him and eat his liver out. Ugh! the ugly beast!"

Somebody took a turn of the rope around the fish's tail and in a moment the shark was swung up by the falls we had rigged. But while he hung in the air and was about to be swung over the rail, Phillis ran up to us.

"Don't!" she cried. "Don't do it! I saw you! How could you be so dreadfully mean—Oh! Clint! how could *you* do such a cruel thing?"

I had been thinking all the time that it was a blamed mean piece of business; but I hadn't had the pluck to say so!

"You stand away, Misse," laughed Bob. "He's all right. Overboard he goes—plop into the sea—and it will be one murderin' old shark fixed jest right."

"You shall not do it!" she cried, and she was so earnest and excited that she stamped her little foot upon the deck. "It is wicked and cruel."

"Why, it ain't nothin' but an old shark, Missee," growled Tom Thornton. "He ain't fit for nothing better."

"He's God's creature. God made him," declared the child. "You've no right to maltreat him. It's wicked. I won't have it."

She was so excited I was afraid she would get sick. I put in *my* oar:

"That's all right, Philly. None of us stopped to think of that side of it. Lower away here, boys, and we'll knock that prop out of his mouth again."

"No you won't!" exclaimed Bob Promise.

I stopped and looked at him. "Why, sure, Bob, you don't mind. If the little girl doesn't want us to do it——"

"Stow that," said Bob, in his very ugliest tone. "That shark ain't hers. I put that stick there. I want to see the man that'll pull it out," and he swelled up like a turkey-cock and acted as though he thought he was the biggest man who ever stepped on the Gullwing's deck.

But if he had been twice as big I reckon I should have stepped up to him! To have anybody speak before Phillis as he did was not to be

endured. Thankful Polk flamed up, too, until you could have touched off a match on his face. Old Tom Thornton reached an arm across and put me back as lightly as though I had been a feather, and seized the rope above Bob's hand.

"Drop it, you landcrab!" he growled. Old Tom seldom got angry; when he did we knew enough to stand from under!

And then appeared Dao Singh. How he had heard the racket I do not know. Light as a panther, and with an eye wickedder than the shark's own, he slid along the deck and stood right at the other elbow of the bully.

"Let the rope go, as Webb Sahib say," he hissed into Bob's ear.

The bully was as amazed as he could well be and keep on his pins. He stepped back and glared from Thank and me to Old Tom, and then around at Singh.

"Holy mackerel!" he murmured. "Do the hull of ye's want the blamed fish? Then, take him!"

The watch burst out laughing. Mr. Barney had himself come forward, and now he spoke.

"Get a harpoon, Webb, and kill the beast at once. That will settle the controversy. I'm not sure that the little one isn't right. We're all too big to torture even such a beast as a shark."

That was the kind of influence Phillis Duane had over all of us. The captain had her on the bridge with him and showed her everything he did when he took the sun's altitude, and all that. Mr. Gates talked with her by the hour. Mr. Barney was forever finding something new with which she could amuse herself. And the black cook and Dao Singh almost came to blows over who should wait upon her the most.

Then came the day when, off Hatteras, we sighted another four-masted ship. She crept out of a fogbank to leeward of us and it was some time before we saw her clearly enough to be sure. That she was tacking northward was the main fact at first which urged us to believe it was our sister ship.

But in an hour it came clearer, and we could be sure. It was the Seamew, standing in very prettily, and it was plain she had sighted us, too. We tacked and her course brought her across our stern. We ran so near the captains could hail each other. Old Cap'n Si waved his glass and shouted:

"We're about to bid you a fond farewell, Joe! Next tack will put us ahead of you. That apple's mine, by jolly!"

"Seems to me if I had such a great craft as the Seamew, I'd have got farther ahead than you

be now," returned our skipper, with scorn. "I reckon the race ain't over yet."

"It's pretty near over. We got good weather comin'. The Seamew can walk away with you in a fair wind."

"All right. Brag's a good dog, but Holdfast's a better one," said Cap'n Joe. "Wait till we sight the Capes o' Virginia."

She was too far away from us then for Cap'n Si to shout again. The rest of us had grinned or scowled at the men aboard the Seamew, as our natures dictated. I had noticed that the boat found adrift with Singh and Phillis in it, had been hoisted aboard the Seamew and was lashed amidships.

Away we went on our tack, came about, and again neared our rival. The Seamew was not pulling away from us much; the wind was heavy. The Gullwing crept up on her and, finally, when the Seamew tacked again, we did the same and she had no chance to cross our bows, even had she been able to.

So we sailed, neck and neck, not half a mile from each other, both ships plunging through the swells with a line of white foam under their quarters, and well heeled over to the wind. Whichever won the race—whether the Gullwing or the Seamew—it would be a good fight.

CHAPTER XXII

In Which the Capes of Virginia Are In Sight

We had a stiff wind blowing—half a gale, indeed—and when we raised other sailing ships, their canvas was clewed down and some of them were running under little more than stormsails. But neither the captain of the *Seamew* nor of the *Gullwing* had any intention of losing a breath of such a favorable breeze.

Our ship heeled over until her rail was under water; and she was laden so heavily that this sort of sailing was perilous. Suppose some of the cargo should shift? Where would we be? Well, just about there, I guess!

Some day the old man will carry the sticks out of her completely," growled Mr. Gates to Mr. Barney.

"Well, let him!" exclaimed the second mate. "We've got to win this time."

"What for?" I heard the other ask, curiously. "Just so Cap'n Joe will win his greening apple?"

Mr. Barney cursed the captain and his apple.

"You want us to win anyway, eh?" pursued

Mr. Gates, in his slow, thoughtful way. "No matter what happens to the Gullwing?"

"She's insured; so's her freight," snapped Mr. Barney.

"It doesn't matter if both good ships should founder and be lost?"

"I don't give a hang!" exclaimed the younger man, bitterly, "as long as the Gullwing goes down fifty fathoms nearer Baltimore than the Seamew."

"And how about the crews?"

"Who's thinking of men—or ships—just now?" demanded Mr. Barney. "Aren't both captains risking lives and property for a silly competition? I'm no worse than they are."

"And so, the rivalry of Cap'n Joe and Cap'n Si will excuse your own mad determination to get to port first?" suggested Mr. Gates, quietly. "I don't believe you'll feel that way, young man, twelve months from now. And how about the little girl?"

"Pshaw! there's no danger," said Mr. Barney, lightly.

"I hope there will be no danger—no more than there is now, at least," said the mate, significantly. Then he saw me on lookout and said, irritably: "Come away! This is no place to talk."

I wondered what the mate thought Mr. Barney would do for the sake of helping the Gullwing to win the race; but I heard nothing more of their conversation. This occurred in the evening when we could just see the ghostly sails of the Seamew as she stood on for us. Mr. Barney soon after took the wheel himself, it being the captain's watch. From that point on to the end the second mate was more frequently at the wheel than at any previous time during the cruise.

Day and night the two huge schooners ran almost even. Our skipper was seldom off the deck. I don't know when he found time to sleep. He never lost a chance to make the most of a puff of wind. The men worked for him eagerly and well; but they stood double watches.

Some of the small sails Cap'n Joe even had us dip overboard so that, well wetted, they would better hold the wind. It was four bells in the morning watch when the Seamew crossed our bow. She had been trying for it for twenty-four hours, or more. And when she cut us off and we had to take her white water, a groan of derision was raised by her crew.

We were sore—every man Jack of us. Cap'n Joe and Cap'n Si had it hot and heavy from their respective stations.

"Better give us a line aboard so't we can tow ye in, Joe!" bawled Cap'n Si.

"You air mighty willin' to give a helpin' hand jest now, Si," returned our skipper, with scorn. "But it warn't allus so."

I saw Mr. Alf Barney at the Seamew's wheel. He handled the ship splendidly. When the Seamew came about on the other tack, her helmsman met the waves just right and swung her over so that the sails scarcely shook at all. She reared up on one tack, turned as it were on her heel, and swept away on the other tack at a speed that sent the spray flying high above her rail. It was a pretty sight.

Our Mr. Barney stood right beside me as I manipulated the Gullwing's helm. He watched the handling of our rival with lowering brow.

"Gimme that wheel!" he snapped, pushing me away and seizing the spokes. The Gullwing was right in the eye of the wind. Cap'n Bowditch was shouting his orders. If the Seamew had rounded prettily, the Gullwing went her one better. We wasted less time hanging in the wind than the Seamew.

"That's the way to do it!" bawled our skipper, dancing on the quarter. "By jinks, Mr. Barney, you handled that wheel well. Keep her so! Steady."

The second mate let me take the wheel again after a minute or two; and his face had remained unsmiling all the time. He had merely been determined to show them all that he could handle the big ship's helm as well in every particular as did his brother.

Our course was west-northwest now to the Capes of Virginia. The fresh gale was out of the same quarter. Therefore we had to beat to windward all the remainder of the race, and although the Seamew had gotten a little the start of us, the Gullwing had a slight advantage. She handled better to windward than her sister ship.

The Seamew stood off on one tack, we on the other. She disappeared beyond the sea line, but standing in some hours later we found her again—and finding her were pleased more than a little in seeing that we had made something up on her. Our skipper's shrewdness was telling.

I knew how it was with Cap'n Si; when things broke wrong for him he paddled about the deck, cursing the hands and the wind and various other things, altogether irrational. Whereas our skipper never lost a trick, kept his head, and never gave an order he was sorry for—and that last is saying a good deal.

We filled away once more and stood back to her. We were making distance fast. Had we held on this time we should have crossed her wake almost under her stern. The man aloft suddenly sang out:

“Land, ho!”

I heard the cry repeated in the Seamew’s tops.

“Cape Henry, sir!” shouted our man to the skipper.

“Aye, aye,” said Cap’n Joe, eagerly. “And when we tack back again we’re going to cross ahead of the Seamew’s bow—and the race will be over.”

He said it with enormous satisfaction. He believed it, too.

“Why will the race be over, Clint?” asked Phillis, who stood beside me at the moment. “I looked at the chart. We’re a long way yet from Baltimore. We are not in sight of the opening into Chesapeake Bay.”

“There are tugs waiting up there in the roads for us,” I told her. “You’ll soon see their smoke. *They* will race out for us, as we race in for the port. We shall go up to Baltimore under steam.”

And my statement was scarcely made ere we saw in the far distance the pillars of smoke from the stacks of the ocean-going tugs. The land

that had been merely a hazy line, grew more clearly defined, although we were not approaching it directly. Soon I could point out to my little friend the other cape guarding the mouth of the Chesapeake—Cape Charles.

The tugs steamed out to meet us under forced draught. More quickly to get in tow of the tug nearest us, which was coming already hooked up, Cap'n Bowditch put the Gullwing about earlier than he had originally intended. As we tacked, so did the Seamew.

"She's afraid to give us an inch," laughed Mr. Barney, taking his place beside the wheel again, and looking up at Mr. Gates.

"It's nip and tuck," returned the first mate. Then to the skipper he said: "Shall I make ready to take the tug's hawser, sir?"

"Right-oh!" declared Captain Bowditch. "And be lively with it. We're too close to fool away a moment. I hope we get the fastest tug."

"She's the Sea Horse, Cap'n!" bawled down the man aloft.

"Smart tug, she is," agreed the skipper.

"And I believe that's the Comet makin' to meet the Seamew."

"Both Norfolk Tug Company's craft—and good ones. I wouldn't give a dollar bonus either way on 'em, would you, Mr. Gates?"

“They’re just as near alike as the Seamew and the Gullwing are alike,” agreed the mate, and went forward.

We were standing in now directly for the channel. The Seamew was headed likewise. We were bound to pass close to our sister ship—so close that, as the moments slipped past, I began to feel some disturbance of mind.

Heaven knows the ocean was broad enough; but the two skippers were obstinate and eager. One would not be likely to want to give way to the other. And moment after moment the two great ships, their canvas filled and the white water split in great waves from their prows, rushed closer and closer together.

CHAPTER XXIII

In Which We Face Death by the Breadth of a Hair

I had walked forward, anxious over the situation of the sister ships. Tom Thornton was right by my side, for Mr. Barney had taken the wheel himself.

"In case of doubt," I asked Tom, "who gives way—the Seamew or the Gullwing?"

"Why, the Seamew, of course," growled Tom.

"Are you sure?"

"I be," he said, emphatically. "No gittin' around it. It has to be her gives way—not us. Both of us are close-hauled, that's a fact; but we on this tack has the right of way. The Seamew's got to come about and give us the road."

"She don't look like she would," I said, gravely.

"Of course she will!"

"Then she'll miss meeting the other tug this time. It will give us a big advantage."

"Don't ye suppose our skipper knows that?"

returned Tom, with a wide grin. "That's what he aimed to do. Oh, Cap'n Joe is a cleaner, now I tell ye!"

It did look to me as though the two great ships were rushing together. If they had been two old-time frigates, aiming to come to a clinch and the crews ordered to "board with cutlass," the appearance of the two could have been no more threatening.

The Seamew's men were grouped along her rail and swinging in her lower shrouds, watching us; and every person aboard the Gullwing, including the cook, was on deck. I heard Captain Bowditch growling to himself:

"What does that lobster mean? Ain't he goin' to give us no sea-way?"

Mr. Barney had taken the wheel of the Gullwing. I saw that his brother was already glued to the spokes of the Seamew's wheel.

"'Ware what ye do there, Mr. Barney," sang out Captain Bowditch.

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Keep her steady."

"Aye, aye, sir."

I caught old Tom by the sleeve of his jumper again.

"Cap'n Si don't mean to give way!" I gasped.

"Wal," said the old seaman, reflectively, it'll be up to him if he doesn't."

"But——"

"It ain't our place to give that blamed Seamew the whole ocean."

"But if the Seamew *won't* give way?" I repeated, vainly.

"What! Not give way! That'd be foolish," growled old Tom. "A man can go bullying his way ashore, pushin' folks inter the gutter and all that, if he's big enough—like Bob yonder. But a captain can't do that at sea. He'd only git what's due him. He'll *have* to give way."

Yet no order was given from the Seamew's quarter; nor did our skipper say a word. I could not believe that Captain Bowditch, even with the sea-law on his side, would risk his beautiful ship and the lives of her crew. Yet if the Seamew continued to run in on us much longer we would have to fall off, or collide with her.

Little Phillis was sitting calmly under her awning, busied with some pieces of sewing—for she was a housewifely little thing. It struck me that an awful death was threatening the innocent child, and I moved toward her.

Thankful Polk was working his way along the deck in the same direction, too.

Captain Bowditch glanced at the child under the awning. If he had had any desperate intention of keeping on, whether or no, so as to pick up his tug ahead of the Seamew, I believe the presence of Phillis Duane restrained him. His hard old face changed.

The Seamew was holding on. She was going to force us. The old man jumped to the rail and motioned with his arm for the helmsman of the Seamew to keep off. But Mr. Alf Barney's gaze rested only on the face of his brother at *our* wheel; and Captain Somes never gave an order.

Captain Bowditch turned and yelled:

"Keep off! keep off, I say! D'ye wanter wreck us?"

He started for the wheel. I do not know whether our Mr. Barney obeyed the order—or tried to obey it. The two great ships, their canvas bellied with the strong gale, seemed to sweep together as though they were magnetized!

It may have been explained by the fact that we were so near each other that one took the wind out of the other's sails. At least, the two huge ships were no longer under control.

"I'm hanged if she ain't got away from

him!" I heard Tom Thornton yell; but which ship he meant I did not know.

The Gullwing took a shoot. The Seamew took a shoot. Then the two ships clinched!

Talk about a smash! It was the most awful collision one could imagine. Two express trains on the same track, coming head-on, could have made no greater explosion of sound. And it did seem as though no other kind of a collision could have resulted in so much wreckage.

I grabbed up Phillis just before the ships came together, and dashed for the companion-way. But as I gained its shelter I saw the spars raining from aloft on both vessels, with the canvas and cordage in a perfect jumble.

It fairly shook the spars out of the Seamew. I believed, at the last moment, that the Gullwing had sheered off. At least, she had taken the blow on more of a slant. The wire stays upon our sister ship had been torn away and her foremast came down and hung over the rail a complete wreck.

Her other masts wavered. I could see that she was shaking like a wounded thing; I believe she was settling even then. She had opened a great hole in her hull forward. I could see the ragged, splintered ends of the planks.

Our own damage and peril I could not gauge until I had set Phillis down and rushed back to the deck. The old Gullwing was hobbling away from her sister ship. Captain Bowditch was bawling orders from the bridge; but I heard nothing but screams of rage and fear from the Seamew. *And Captain Si Somes was no longer in sight.*

"Axes, men!" roared our skipper. "Get aloft there! Cut away wreckage! Clew up everything that ain't torn away. Look alive, up there, Mr. Gates."

"Aye, aye, sir!" responded the mate from forward.

"Keep her steady, Mr. Barney!" commanded the captain.

I heard no response. I glanced aft as I worked my way up the backstays. Mr. Jim Barney still stood at our wheel. He hung to the spokes and held the ship steady. But a whiter face and a more miserable face I had never seen upon mortal man.

CHAPTER XXIV

In Which the Tragedy of the Racing Ship Is Completed

League upon league of the sea—across and again across two oceans—the sister ships had raced, to fall afoul of each other here almost within sight of port!

While we aboard the Gullwing were cutting adrift the wreckage for dear life, another mast—the mizzen—fell across the Seamew. She was down dreadfully by the head. We could hear the roar of the water pouring into the hole stove in her hull.

I knew Mr. Hollister's voice, and he was shouting orders to the crew. But nobody heard Cap'n Si speaking; nor was he in sight. I knew as well then as I did afterward that, at the moment of the collision, the master of the Seamew went overboard, sank, and never came up again!

Down came the aftermast of the Seamew; the mainmast was swaying. I reckon the crew

responded to Mr. Hollister's orders not at all. I heard the wail of:

"Boats! boats! take to the boats!"

But when they took another look at the wabbling masts, they waited to launch no boat. With a few words but much action the crew went over her rail, now almost even with the sea, and one after the other began to claw out for the Gullwing which lay to not two cable's lengths away from the sinking ship.

But Mr. Alfred Barney held to the spokes of her wheel; he made no offer to leave the Seamew, although Mate Hollister, like the men, was already in the sea.

As I hacked at the steel cordage and broken spars I heard Captain Bowditch shouting directions to the men below, and to the men in the water. Ropes and life buoys were flung to the seamen from the sinking ship. In this comparatively quiet sea there was little likelihood of any of them being drowned.

Mr. Hollister waited to see his hands drawn over the rail of the Gullwing before he came inboard himself. But while this was going on Captain Bowditch discovered the missing second mate still on the wreck.

"Come away from that!" he shouted to

Alfred Barney. "Come on! Jump in! We'll haul you out."

The young man made no reply, nor did he move from the wheel.

"Come away, you fool!" roared Captain Bowditch.

But Alfred Barney, like Jim Barney, seemed frozen to the spokes of the wheel. The thought in my confused mind was: *Had the two brothers deliberately wrecked the sister ships?*

The Gullwing had recovered from the shock of the collision. She was not going to sink—at least, not right away. All her crew were inboard now, and Mr. Hollister followed. Nobody spoke of poor Cap'n Si. We all knew that he was missing. But there was a great to-do about Alfred Barney.

"What does that eternal fool want to stay over there for?" yelled Captain Joe to Mr. Hollister. "Is he a dummy?"

"He iss *fey*," whispered old Stronson in my ear.

"Looks like it was his fault the ships came together," said Bob Promise.

We had descended to the deck again now. Our upper works were in an awful tangle; but we could do no more at present. The tug was

steaming in near to us now and it did not matter if we did drift.

All our eyes were fastened upon the Seamew. She was going down steadily, head-on. Already her bows were being lapped by the waves clear to the butt of the jib-boom.

Mr. Hollister sent another wailing cry across to the second mate at the Seamew's wheel; but the figure did not move, nor did Alf Barney make any reply.

Suddenly our Mr. Barney left the helm. He just motioned to me, and I grabbed the spokes. He sprang to the rail and held out both his arms to his brother.

"Come! Alf, Alf! Come!"

Then it was that Alfred Barney turned his head and looked across at us. His face, white as his brother's had been, broke into a frosty smile. He raised one hand and waved it to his twin. And then——

There was a roar of sound, a rush of wind, a yell in chorus from all hands aboard the Gull-wing, and the mainmast of the Seamew came rushing down, astern! The great spar had been shaken loose and it fell with all its weight along the deck of the laboring schooner. The topmast broke off and sprang into the air, along with a tangle of steel cable and shredded sails.

And when that topmast struck the deck again it wrecked the Seamew's wheel and pinioned Mr. Alfred Barney beneath its wreckage!

A general shout of horror arose from the Gullwing; but above it rang the clarion tone of Jim Barney's voice:

"Boat! Boat! Launch the quarter-boat!"

Our men sprang to their stations; the young second mate gave his orders quick and sharp. Captain Bowditch did not gainsay him. Mr. Jim Barney had it all his own way.

His crew—the same that had manned the boat when she had picked up the castaways—quickly took their places in the craft. She was lowered with a plop into the sea.

"Give way, men!"

They bent to the oars like giants. The boat shot across the sea to the fast sinking Seamew. I held the spokes of the Gullwing's wheel idly and watched. Indeed, the tug coming up to hook us attracted no attention from anybody aboard our ship at that moment.

The Seamew was wallowing deep in the water now. Her head was under and her stern was kicking up. She was about to dive like a duck to the bottom.

Suddenly the air-pressure below blew off her forward hatch. Instantly the waves broke across the deck and the water poured into the open hatchway.

Swiftly and more swiftly she sank. When our boat came to the hulk, she presented a steep side for one to mount from the small boat.

"Alf! Alf!" we heard our second mate yell. We could not hear that there was an answer

from the man under the wreckage of the topmast.

"Hold her in close, boys!" commanded Mr. Jim Barney. "Give me that boathook!"

"You'll be drowned, sir!" I heard Thankful Polk cry.

"She's going down—she'll suck us all under," declared Bob Promise.

"Stand by, as I tell you!" commanded the second mate again.

In a moment he had fastened the boathook somehow, and went up hand over hand. He seized the rail of the sinking ship. The small boat backed away. I believe Bob Promise thrust her off with his oar.

"Look out there!" bawled Captain Bowditch, from our poop. "You're taking your life in your hand, lad!"

Mr. Jim Barney merely waved his hand, notifying the master of the Gullwing that his warning had been heard. But he crawled right up to the stern over that wreckage. He did not look back once.

And down settled the Seamew, lower and lower. She was under seas as far back as the stump of the mainmast. The water boiled around her. There was good reason for our men in the quarterboat to back off. Once caught in the suck of the sinking ship, our men and their craft would go under, too!

I saw Mr. Jim Barney spring over a pile of debris. He stooped, tore away some of the

wrecked stuff, and then stood up with his brother's body clasped in his arms.

For an instant I saw the white face of the unconscious man. There was a streak of crimson on his forehead. Jim Barney looked down into the countenance of his brother and the men in our quarterboat uttered in chorus a long-drawn cry. The Seamew was going down.

Slowly, the eddying water seething about her wounded hull, the ship settled.

"Jump!" shouted Cap'n Bowditch, leaning over the rail, his own face pallid and his eyes aglare.

But that would not have saved them. Mr. Barney could not have leaped far enough with his burden to have overcome the suck of the maelstrom forming about the wreck. And it was right for the men in the small boat to sheer off.

The wreck slid under the surface. Almost the last thing we saw was Mr. Barney, holding his burden in his arms, his own face still bent above the unconscious countenance of his brother.

CHAPTER XXV

In Which a Very Serious Question Is Discussed

The boat from the Gullwing was so near the maelstrom caused by the sinking of the ship that her bow was sucked under and she shipped a lot of water. We saw the boys bailing energetically.

Then Thank stood up and cast off his outer clothing and his shoes. Bob Promise, who pulled the bow oar, followed suit. They each took the precaution to lash the end of a line to one wrist before going overboard. Where the Seamew had sunk was a circle of tossing waves, and broken bits of wreckage were popping up from below in a most dangerous fashion.

The suspense aboard the Gullwing and in the boat was great indeed as the two young fellows went down. If the Barneys had been entangled in any wreckage on the lost vessel, Thank and Bob would never be able to reach them, for the sea at that spot is very deep, and the hulk of the schooner would finally rest upon the bottom.

Mr. Gates had run back to the stern and stood beside me, gazing off across the tumbling sea.

"God help the boy!" he muttered, and I knew he referred to our Mr. Barney. "I

doubt now he'd rather be under the seas than above after this day's work."

"Do you believe it was Mr. Barney's fault?" I whispered.

He started and looked around at me. I repeated my question.

"Was it Jim Barney's fault?" he returned. "What do you think?"

"I don't believe it. He sheered off——"

"Too late," muttered Mr. Gates.

"Just as soon as the captain ordered him to," I declared eagerly. "When Captain Bowditch ordered him to 'Keep off' he swung her over. I saw him."

"It was too late then, I tell you," declared the first mate of the Gullwing.

"But how about Mr. Alf Barney?" I cried. "He held on to the course all the time till she hit us."

Mr. Gates said nothing.

"If it was anybody's fault it was Mr. Alf Barney's," I repeated, stubbornly.

"No. It cannot be laid to his fault in any case," said the mate, sternly.

"Why not, sir?" I asked.

"Because his captain gave no order. Captain Si had the deck. He was in command."

"Then Captain Bowditch is at fault, too," I declared. "He did not speak quick enough."

"He gave the order quick enough," returned Mr. Gates, gloomily, "but Jim Barney hesitated. That's where the fault lies. Jim Bar-

ney hated to give the Seamew right of way, and he held us onto the course after he was ordered to keep off. That's where the fault lies, my boy—that's where it lies."

At another time I do not suppose the mate would have discussed the point with me, I being merely a foremast hand. But we were all stirred up and for the moment quarterdeck etiquette was forgotten.

But in a moment there was a cheer raised in our little boat, dancing out there on the swells. Thank's head appeared, and one hand grasped the gunwale of the boat. He dragged into view the two Barney's, locked in an embrace that could not be broken.

Bob Promise came to his help instantly. Together they held the twins up. Both the Barney's were unconscious. Mr. Jim must have had a frightful fight down there under the sea to hold to his brother and get out of the strong suck of the settling wreck.

The brothers were hauled into the small boat, and then Thank and Bob followed. As quickly as possible she was rowed back to the Gullwing.

Meanwhile the big tug Sea Horse had steamed up to us and rounded to under our bows. The hawser was passed and Mr. Gates took charge of the rigging of the bridle. Our skipper himself went to the rail to meet the incoming boat.

"Good boys," he said, warmly. "It's a pity poor old Si warn't found, too."

I wondered if that was so. It seemed to me that Captain Silas Some was the man mainly to blame for the tragedy. I could not believe that the onus of it would be heaped upon our second mate.

The boat was hoisted in. Both the Barneys remained unconscious; but Mr. Hollister and the captain declared they would be all right soon. Mr. Alf Barney had not been seriously injured by the falling of the mast. They were taken below and Mr. Hollister took charge of them, with one of his own hands to help in bringing the brothers back to their senses.

The Gullwing quickly felt the tug of the hawser binding her to the Sea Horse and with her sails clewed up she wallowed on through the choppy seas into the broad mouth of the Chesapeake.

No need of aiding the steam-tug by hoisting sail. The race was over. The Seamew had run her course and the Gullwing was the winner. But a sorry winning of the race it proved to be.

Mr. Gates kept both watches at work for a time making the loose spars secure. The steel stays that had been broken had to be reset, or we might have one of our masts coming down as the Seamew's had.

The work was done before the second dog-watch and then we had a chance to sit down and fraternize with the men from the Seamew.

"What gave the old Seamew her ticket," said Job Perkins, "was our changing a live

man for a dead one. When Clint, here, went over the side and a man that had been garroted came back inboard, I knowed we was in for trouble. And that ten dollars you're to pay me at Baltimore," he whispered in my ear, "ain't going to pay me for the dunnage I lost."

"How d'ye s'pose that feller got strangled with his lanyard?" demanded another of the Seamew's men.

"Ask that nigger they've got aboard the Gullwing here," growled another. "He knows. And he'll hafter tell it to the consul."

But I made up my mind that, if it were possible, Dao Singh should not be obliged to go before any court, or any consul, to explain that matter. The fact was, there wasn't anything he could explain. Under a dreadful provocation he had killed the sailor. But I doubted if his excuse for committing the act would be accepted by the law.

The men were mainly interested, however, in the circumstances surrounding the collision of the sister ships and the sinking of the Seamew. The great question was: Who was at fault? But we conducted the discussion in very low tones, that the officer on deck might not overhear us.

"Talk as ye please," grunted Job Perkins. "If two other men—men that warn't Barneys—had been at the helm of the two ships, there wouldn't never been no trouble."

"Well," declared I, "*our* Mr. Barney sheered off."

"Not soon enough," said Tom Thornton, shaking his head.

"Just as soon as the order was given!" I cried. "And it wasn't our place to give way, at that."

"Oh," said Job, "we'll all grant the old man—Cap'n Si—was the main one to blame. Leastways, he's the one dead, and the dead man is always blamed. But Mr. Alf Barney never got no word to change his helm—and yours did."

"The ships come together; they was bound to do so, sooner or later," said old Stronson, shaking his head. "It iss not de men iss to blame—no! You remember the Chieftain and de Antelope? Dey was sister ships, too. Dey could not be anchored within a cable's length of each odder, or dey come togedder."

"By jings! the old man's right," declared Tom Thornton. "I sailed on the Antelope once. There seemed to be magnets drawin' them two ships together. Gettin' under way at Savannah we bumped the Chieftain and tore away her fore chains and made a mess of our own bows."

"I heered if the two craft was anchored full and plenty apart, and in no tideway, they'd rub sides within twenty-four hours," said another man.

"And das iss de trut'," declared Stronson.

"Dey wass sister ships—like das Seamew and Gullwing. Nopoty can keep dem apart when dey gets jest so near to each odder."

"That's so! I bet that was what did it more than the Barney boys," agreed Job Perkins.

"Sich things happen, as we knows," said Tom Thornton.

And I declare, all the old fellows went off on this tangent and accepted this idea as the true explanation for the sinking of the Seamew. They talked it over and became more and more positive that it was so. The superstition that the sister ships had a natural attraction for each other took a firm hold upon their minds. I could see plainly that if the firm had any of these old barnacles into court, they would swear to this ridiculous idea. At least, it might throw a bit of weight against the idea that the Barney boys had deliberately wrecked the two ships.

"Jest the same," observed old Tom, slowly, "study on it as we may, there's one place where it'll be decided for sure, as far as the legal end of it goes. The insurance court will have the last say."

"Wrong you be, Tom," declared Job, "wrong you be. The final settlement of the hull matter will be in the offices of Barney, Blakeslee & Knight. Never mind what the court says, nor how the insurance is adjusted; them two boys will hafter go before the firm."

"By mighty! that's so," agreed Tom.

"And the way it's turned out," pursued Job, "it looks like Mr. Jim Barney would have the best of it."

"How so?" we asked.

"Don't you see that he's bound ter be first ashore at Baltimore?" and the Seamew's oldest hand chuckled. "He's come through on his ship and will stand first in the old man's estimation—no matter how he done it. Ye know Jothan Barney."

"By crackey! will Mr. Jim beat Mr. Alfred, then, and be boss of the firm?" Thankful Polk demanded.

"That'll be the end of the story, son," said Job, turning his cud in his cheek. "Old Jothan sent 'em out, one ter beat the other. By jinks! one *has* beat the other. No matter how he's done it. It's done, and so old Jothan will agree, I reckon."

"But won't the firm punish Mr. Jim?" I asked.

"I wanter see the firm do anything that old Jothan don't want it to do," scoffed Job.

"And that's so, too," agreed old Tom.

"Then, believing that Mr. Jim Barney deliberately wrecked the Seamew so as to beat his brother into Baltimore, you fellows think his uncle will receive him with open arms?"

"That'll be about it," said Job. "Jothan Barney is that way. He wanted one of his nephews to show what they call 'initiative' and all that. Jim Barney's showed it——"

“And risked drowning a whole ship’s crew—two ships’ crews, in fact!—including his brother?” I cried. “You believe he did that just to get ahead and win his uncle’s approval?”

“That’s it,” said Job.

“Then if he hated his brother so,” I demanded, raising my voice in my earnestness, “why did he risk his own life to save him?”

The men were silent for a moment. Then Mr. Gates’ voice came booming forward from the quarter:

“You men stow your jaw-tackle. You’re gassin’ too much.”

That ended the discussion. But I was by no means convinced that the seamen understood the two Barneys. I had an entirely different idea of how the matter would fall out in the end.

CHAPTER XXVI

In Which Is Told How the Barney Boys Go Ashore

Of course, the sinking of the Seamew would be reported by the tug Comet, that had gone out to meet her, and the news would be telegraphed to Baltimore long before we reached the port. The owners would know all about the trouble, and I reckon Captain Joe Bowditch had pretty serious thoughts that night as we were towed up the bay.

It was a lovely evening and Phillis came out on deck and begged me to sit with her. She had not been so greatly frightened when the two ships collided, because I had been right with her and the trouble was over so quickly. I hated to think of what might have happened, however, if it had been the fate of the Gullwing to sink instead of her sister ship.

Since they have been carried below, unconscious, none of the foremast hands had seen the two Barney boys. We only knew that they had both recovered and were none the worse for their ducking.

It was now the captain's watch, however, and Mr. Jim Barney came up and paced the larboard side of the deck, aft. It was not long before I caught sight of a similar figure pacing

the starboard side of the house, and knew that Mr. Alf Barney had come up, too.

Philly and I had been whispering together under her awning and suddenly she put her finger on my lips to enjoin secrecy, and tripped away to Mr. Jim Barney's side.

She tucked her hand in his, I could see, and walked beside him. I am not sure whether she said anything to him, or not; but I know he did not send her away from him, although he was on duty.

Then, after a bit, I saw Philly go to the other side of the deck and join Mr. Alf Barney. She must have got acquainted with him below deck, for he welcomed her warmly. They talked earnestly for a few moments, and then the little girl ran back to me.

I had been gazing idly off over the rail, watching the lights ashore, and thinking of my homecoming. In this land-locked bay I could be pretty safe in believing that I would soon be with my mother.

Of course, through the machinations of my cousin I had been kept from coming directly home when I was at Punta Arenas. But Paul Downes would not be in Baltimore when we landed, to trouble me in the least. Once I got ashore with Phillis and Thank, I was determined to hike for Darringford House in short order.

I had enough money to pay two railroad fares home—the little girl's and my own. Thank and I were to receive no wages for our work aboard

the Gullwing. But I would leave Thank enough money to keep him until I could telegraph him more from Darringtonford.

He proposed to go home himself for a time—back to Georgia. He had a half sister there that he wanted to see. Then he was to join me for the balance of the summer on the Massachusetts coast. We had already planned great fun at Bolderhead, despite the fact that my bonnie sloop, the Wavecrest, was far, far away—at Buenos Ayres.

The matter of Dao Singh was not so easily adjusted. I knew very well that Captain Bowditch would insist upon reporting the case of Phillis to the proper authorities at Baltimore. That would include the examination of the Hindoo on the details of the wreck of the Galland. And just as sure as they got the man into court I knew he would convict himself.

I was not willing to see the examination dragged on for weeks, perhaps months. And the end was not sure, either. I did not want Dao Singh punished; and I knew that it would trouble Philly greatly if the man was not at her beck and call most of the time.

However, if Dao Singh, as a pertinent witness in the case, was not to be found, I believed I could get any fair-minded court to place Phillis in the care of my mother until the matter was concluded. That was the scheme I had in mind.

Therefore, when we landed I proposed that Dao Singh should disappear. I had already sounded him. I had no money to spare, but he seemed to have worn a belt about his waist under his clothing, in which he told me he carried valuables. Money I supposed.

Nor was he ignorant of the port to which we were bound. He had studied the geography of the world and he had corresponded in some way with members of his own race located in Baltimore.

"To them will I go, Webb Sahib, directly the ship docks. If there is hue and cry, they will not find me. When your augustness and the Memsahib en train for your home, I shall en train likewise. I shall not be far from you."

"But you will not know when we go," I cried.

"Let not the Sahib fear for that. Dao Singh will have means of knowing. Your movements, Webb Sahib, will be learned, although I be afar. Fear not."

And this is all he would tell me. Rather a rare bird, was Singh. He treated me always with immense deference, waited on me when I would let him, hand and foot, yet always retained an air of being upon a mental or spiritual plane immensely removed from my own. And I'm not at all sure that he was not possessed of intelligence far above the order of the European or American.

But I have got away from my text. Philly

and I were sitting watching the lights on shore. As we were under towage, the watch on deck had little to do. Therefore the captain did not mind being aft with the little lass.

Suddenly I saw the two Barney boys cross the deck and stand together under the break of the quarter. It was dark there and I could not see how they looked at each other, nor could I hear what they said. But they stood there for some minutes and, when they separated, and Mr. Jim went back to his duty, I hoped that they had not parted in anger.

It seemed a dreadful thing if either, or both, of the twins should be accused of losing one ship and all but wrecking the other. As young merchant officers, just starting out in life, the affair would about ruin them. And if old Jothan Barney stuck to his word and took Jim Barney into the firm, and gave him all his money, what would become of Mr. Alfred?

At midnight I turned in; Philly had sought her cabin long before. She wished to be up bright and early to see the Gullwing docked. But I could not sleep for milling over the case of the Barney boys in my mind.

My watch was called at eight bells to wash down and make the deck as tidy as possible for the docking, although we were not yet far north of the mouth of the York river. The best we could do, however, our beautiful Gullwing looked like a drunken old harraden that had been out all night!

The day was beautiful. As the shores and islands were more clearly revealed, Philly's delight knew no bounds.

"Oh, the land! the beautiful land!" she sighed. "I want to jump for joy."

"Have you got enough of the sea for all time?"

"I do not think I am afraid of the sea—not as afraid as I was once," she replied. "But think how good it will be to step ashore! I really don't feel, Clint, as though I would care to sail again right away."

And despite the sorry story we had to tell of the Seamew, there was a briskness in everybody's movements that told of shore leave, and most of the men's faces were agrin. Those forward were making up parties for certain pleasures and entertainments which had been denied them for so many months.

Old Stronson was going immediately to the Bethel, there to pay Captain Sowle the dollar he had owed the good superintendent for five years and more.

"I do that chob at vonce," said the old man, "pefore somet'ings happen to me. Meppe Captain Sowle vill take my moneys for me and find me a goot berth aboard some gentleman's yacht. Das berth I like, I t'ank."

I knew he wanted to get away from the drink and I hoped with all my heart that the old man would be able to do so.

Tom Thoruton had a married sister in Balti-

more, over to whom the bulk of his paycheck was always paid by Barney, Blakeslee & Knight. He would be put up by her, and cared for, and kept straight as long as possible; then the old man would go to sea again—in the Gullwing if possible.

As for Bob Promise and some other of the younger men, they were all for "the sporting life."

"I'm goin' to tog meself up in decent clothes," said Bob. "No slops or sheeny hand-me-downs for me. You watch my smoke, boy, when I get ashore. I ain't sure that I won't go up to some swell hotel and stay for a week. I reckon my bunch of coin will stand for it."

Never a word about salting some of the money away for some worthy object. Jack Tar of the merchant marine has only two states of existence—slavery aboard ship and license ashore. There seems to be no happy medium for him.

The Sea Horse towed us into our berth. The hawsers went ashore and we were warped in beside the dock amid a deal of clatter and confusion.

There was a crowd to receive us. Some of these people were newspaper men. The story of the wreck of the Seamew had appeared in the Baltimore morning papers and reporters for the afternoon sheets were here for the particulars at first hand. Nobody was allowed aboard, however, although the quarantine offi-

cers had given us a clean bill of health down the bay.

I saw standing upon the dock a tall, withered old man, with a very sharp face and white hair and mustache. He looked like a hawk, and was dressed all in shabby black. Without asking, I knew this to be old Jothan Barney, the head of the firm that owned the Gullwing.

I did not see either of his nephews greet him from the ship. Mr. Jim had plenty to do while the ship docked, and Mr. Alf was not far from his brother at any time. Indeed, I was not the only person who noticed that the Barney boys stuck together.

A section of the rail had been removed amidships. A narrow gangway was run out from the dock, the ropes were caught by two of the seamen, and the plank made fast.

"First ashore!" sang out the old man and looked from our Mr. Barney to his brother.

We all fell back for a moment. It was evident that the Barneys would go ashore even before Cap'n Joe. They approached the plank and both smiled.

"All right, Alf?" I heard Mr. Jim say.

"I'm with you, Jim," was the reply.

And with their arms locked, the twin brothers walked ashore together and went straight to stand before old Jothan Barney!

CHAPTER XXVII

In Which I Receive a Telegram That Troubles Me

For a moment there was a dead silence among the crews of the sister ships. Then Captain Bowditch himself took off his hat and started the cheering.

And how he did yell! If both vessels had come home safely we could not have given tongue more joyfully. For in that moment every man of us knew that whatever friction there had been betwixt Jim and Alf Barney, they were once more brothers and friends!

Of course, the crowd ashore thought we were just glad to get home again—that we were expressing our satisfaction upon getting to Baltimore, safe and sound. But the Barneys knew what it meant and both of them waved their hands in response to our hearty hurrah.

As the newspaper reporters crowded aboard to interview Captain Bowditch I saw that the three Barneys walked away. The old man did not even speak to the skipper of the Gullwing. I reckoned any comment upon the skipper's actions by the members of the firm of Barney, Blakesley & Knight would be postponed until some later time.

The newspaper fellows were eager for a story;

but Mr. Gates and Mr. Hollister "shooed" them away from the foremast hands. The men would not be discharged until the next day, when they would be taken to the offices of the firm for a settlement of their accounts, and to receive their discharges. Until that time they must remain aboard and continue under the discipline of the officers.

"If you writer chaps," said Mr. Gates, with a grin, "want to get these old hardshells to spinning yarns, you'll have to wait till they lay their course for Front Street. You'll have to be contented with facts from Captain Bowditch just now."

So the stories of the Seamew's tragedy were not very ornate in the afternoon papers after all; and public interest in the affair was soon quenched.

When my watch was piped to dinner the doctor gave me the tip to wait on deck and in a few minutes Mr. Gates beckoned me to the afterhouse.

"Quarterdeck etiquette is busted all to flinders, Clint," he said, in an unusually jolly tone, for he was naturally a grave man. But the fact that we were in the home port after so many months was bound to thaw the iciest manner. "You're to dine with the old man and Miss Philly."

It was a shame the way I looked! My second suit of slops from the chest were pretty well worn out and my head was a regular mop. I

had reckoned on seeing a barber about the first thing I did when I went ashore; and I hoped to squeeze out money enough for a cheap suit, too, in which I might make a more presentable appearance going home.

"Never mind your clothing, Clinton," said Captain Bowditch, when I made some remark of this kind. "We'll excuse your looks."

"And I'm not much better off than you," laughed Philly. "I have to go to bed when Singh washes this dress."

"By the way, where is Singh?" demanded the captain. "After dinner I want we should all go up to the British consul—and I want Singh to go to."

But Dao Singh was not to be found. I said nothing about my talk with the Hindoo. I knew that nobody had seen him after we got into our berth. He might, even, have gone ashore ahead of the Barneys. However, gone he was and the captain was quite put out.

"That's the trouble with these natives," he growled. "Can't trust 'em. I'd ought to put him in irons——"

"What for, Captain? What has poor Singh done?" asked Philly.

And then the captain took a tumble to himself. The little girl knew nothing about the man murdered in the boat from the wreck of the Galland.

"Well, it's a serious thing—for me—to have

let him get away without his going before the authorities," Captain Bowditch growled.

That was not exactly true however. Nobody would blame him because the Hindoo had departed. But the old man said he would take us both up town right after dinner. I begged for a little time to make myself presentable and was given an hour's leave ashore. I found a barber and got my hair trimmed properly and then went to a second hand shop and got an outfit of coat, pants and shoes, with a new hat for six dollars. Nothing very fashionable, you may be sure; but I reckoned the butler would let me into the house with 'em on—by the side door, at least!

So the captain and Philly and I walked over to the British consulate and saw a young man with eyeglasses and something of a lisp, dressed in clothes that could not possibly be made so badly anywhere else but in London. He was a nice young man, though; and he insisted upon making tea for Philly when he heard that she had been two weeks in an open boat, as though she might still need a "pick-me-up" because of that adventure.

It seemed that he had already heard of the loss of the Galland. Her burned hull had been sighted by two steamships and reported before the Gullwing arrived in port. But none of the crew or passengers of the ill-fated ship, until Phillis Duane came, had been reported

as saved. The Galland had been posted as a complete loss, with crew and passengers.

"What puzzles me," said the English official, "is the distance the Galland and the boat you found drifted apart. Her bulk was reported as sighted only a day or two after your Gullwing picked up the little girl and the Hindoo." The captain had already explained about Dao Singh. "Yet," continued the consul, "the Galland had drifted far up the coast in the steamship route—she's a dangerous derelict, and has been so reported to the Hydrographic office at Washington, and to Lloyds in London.

"Whereas, Captain, the latitude and longitude you give is far, far to the south. South of the Straits, in fact."

"Three hunder' mile sou'east of the Capes of the Virgin, sure enough," admitted Captain Bowditch.

"Yes. The Galland had come through the Straits and must have met with her accident not far outside. It seems strange that only one boat got away from her—and that one improperly manned."

"As near as we can find out, sir," said the skipper, "she had but two seamen in her beside the Hindoo and the little girl here."

He had taken the captain and I into his private office while he examined us regarding the particulars of the affair. I told him frankly about the dead man in the boat.

"I must find this Dao Singh," he said. "Un-

til I get him I cannot call the case closed, of course. And then, there's the little girl."

Captain Bowditch spoke up for me, then. He had had a good report of me from Captain Hiram Rogers of the *Scarboro*, and he believed what I had told him about my folks. He would go bail for my appearance, and the production of Philly safe and sound, whenever we should be wanted.

"A very good arrangement," agreed the consul, seemingly mightily relieved regarding the girl. He was a bachelor himself. "Meanwhile I will do my best to locate her people. Of course, she must have been consigned to somebody in England, even if she does not know who. It seems to me as though the name of Captain Erskin Duane is not unfamiliar to me."

So we got away from there after a while. When I had gone ashore to get my fancy rig-out I had sent a telegram to Ham Mayberry. I did that so as not to startle my mother, believing that Ham would know how to break the news of my arrival to her better than anybody else. Ham had been with us so many years that he was like one of the family.

And having telegraphed him I was mighty anxious for a reply that all was well.

Captain Bowditch left us to report at the offices of the ship owners and Philly and I went back to the *Gullwing* where Ham was to send his message. It had arrived while we were at

the consul's and Mr. Gates handed the envelope to me the moment I came aboard.

With some perturbation, I broke the seal, and to say the least I was amazed when I read Hamilton Mayberry's telegram:

"I will meet every train. Speak to nobody until you see me.—H. M."

CHAPTER XXVIII

In Which My Homecoming Proves To Be a Strange One Indeed

Naturally I thought that Ham's telegram spelled trouble; but I kept my thoughts to myself. I did not feel like discussing the matter even with Thankful Polk.

We had begun to break out the Gullwing's cargo and worked until dark. The next day the roustabouts would come aboard and relieve us of that. All hands (save Thank and I) would go up to the office to be paid off.

We in the forecastle heard nothing about the Barneys that day, nor did Mr. Jim return to the ship. We spent the evening skylarking on the forward deck. A man had come aboard with an accordion and the men danced, and sang, and had a general rough-and-tumble jollification. But I only looked on. Tomorrow would close such scenes for me—perhaps forever.

In the morning a lawyer and his clerk came aboard to take testimony regarding the loss of the Seamew. Just as I had supposed, the men who talked most were the old fellows who believed that the two ships had come together because of some supernatural attraction. The real incidents of the collision were buried under

a heap of rubbish, testimony that would help the courts and the insurance people mighty little in getting at the facts of the case.

I was thankful that the lawyer did not put many questions to me. I stuck to my belief that Mr. Jim Barney had obeyed Captain Bowditch's order to change the course of the Gullwing as soon as the order was given.

When the examination was over there was a deal of bustle in preparation of all hands going ashore. I paid Job Perkins the ten dollars I had promised him and lent Thank all I could spare after saving out enough for the tickets for Philly and myself to Darringtonford.

I suppose I might have borrowed a little money from Captain Bowditch; but Thank could get along until I could telegraph him a hundred from home. He had agreed to accept that much from me, and promised to join me at my mother's summer home later.

Then we bade the men good-bye, and shook hands with the skipper and Mr. Gates and Mr. Hollister. Thank went with Philly and me to the railroad station. There I hoped to find Dao Singh—and Philly was anxious about him, too. But the Hindoo did not appear.

We could not wait for him; nor did I know how to find him in Baltimore. But I told Thank to keep a watch out for him, and if he saw Singh to let me know at once by telegraph.

We took the fast express for Boston and only had to transfer at one point. From that point

I had engaged seats in the chair car and berths for both Philly and myself. There was but one day coach attached to the train when we changed, and we were scarcely aboard when a tall, turbanned figure appeared at the window beside my seat.

"Oh, Dao Singh!" cried Philly, and then rattled away to him in his own tongue.

He made me a low obeisance. "I have come, Sahib, as I promised," he said, softly. "I take train here with you and the Memsahib. I ride forward in the other coach;" and bowing he left us.

I saw that he had a complete new outfit—a costume of his own country. He was a strange looking object as he stalked away to take his place in the day car.

I sent Ham another wire to say what hour we would arrive at Darringford station. I was sincerely worried about my mother. Perhaps she was ill. Perhaps—I dared not ruminate farther on that subject.

Phillis was greatly interested in the country through which the train flew. We looked pretty shabby—both of us—to be riding in a first-class coach, and the other passengers were curious about us. But we made no acquaintances on the way.

We arrived safely in Boston in the morning, and crossed the city to the other station. We had not long to wait for a local train that stopped at Darringford. It was not long after

nine o'clock when the train stopped and we disembarked.

I saw Ham instantly; but he did not have our carriage. There was nobody else to welcome me—there was nobody about the station, indeed, who recognized me. I had changed a good deal during the twenty-two months I had been away.

But old Ham knew me. He rushed at me and wrung my hands and sputtered something at first that I could not understand. At last he said:

"And ye couldn't have timed it better, Master Clint. You're just in the nick of time. The court sits in ha'f an hour."

Then he caught sight of Phillis and Dao Singh right behind me.

"What's all this?" he muttered.

"I'll tell you later," I said. "It's too long a story to give you now. Besides, you've got to tell me things first. Isn't the carriage here? Can't we all go right to Darringford House? Haven't you told mother?"

He shook his head slowly.

"Can't take you home, jest yet, Master Clint," he said.

"But mother! is——?"

"She ain't sick, and she ain't well. Only poorly. Nothing to be worried about. And now that you're here I reckon things will be straightened out all right."

"Chester Downes!" I ejaculated.

"Yes. He's cutting up didoes," grunted Ham.

"But where is Lawyer Hounsdictch?" I cried.

And then Ham *did* amaze me—and startle me, too.

"Old Mr. Hounsdictch died a month ago, Clint," he said. "It was sudden. He was an old man, you know, and there is nobody to take his place."

"My guardian is dead, then!" I exclaimed.

"He was co-trustee with your mother, Clint. That's where the trouble lies. Chester Downes is riggin' to get appointed in his place. It comes up before the Judge of Probate this morning. You ain't but jest in time."

That woke me up, now I tell you! All my wits were working in a minute. Ham needed to make little more talk about it for me to fully understand what was threatening.

"And mother didn't object?" I asked.

"You know what a holt Downes has over her," Ham said gravely. "She *did* want him to wait until you came home. We got your letter from Valpariso and we knew the Gull-wing was about due in Baltimore. But Chester Downes—you know him!"

"Let us take my little friend and Dao Singh to the hotel," I said. "They can wait for us there. I must have a lawyer, Ham."

"I got you one," said the old man, quickly. "We'd have gone before the court if you hadn't come in time and tried to get a stay."

"Who is he?"

"Colonel Playfair."

I knew him by reputation. A better man didn't live in Darringford, nor a better lawyer—now that Mr. Hounsdlitch was dead. And it seemed to me that I remembered something about Colonel Playfair and my grandfather having once been close friends.

"Have you got any money, Ham?" I asked him. "For I haven't a cent."

"Plenty," he replied.

"Get a carriage, then, and drive us to the hotel first; then to Colonel Playfair's office."

"Aye, aye, sir!" returned Ham and in a few moments we were off in a station hack, Ham on the seat with the driver.

Mr. and Mrs. Bramble kept the Darringford Hotel, and I left Philly in the good lady's care. Dao Singh remained with her, of course. Then Ham and I raced to the office of the lawyer.

It was already half past nine. There was no time to lose if the matter of an appointment of a new trustee for the Darringford estate was the first item on the docket.

I knew Colonel Playfair by sight—a soldierly, white haired veteran with one arm. His shabby offices were in a brick building near the courthouse. I don't suppose he would have known me in my present guise had not Ham Mayberry vouched for my identity.

"A close call, young man," he said. "I understand you object to this Chester Downes

being appointed in the place of Mr. Houns-ditch?"

"I more than object," I cried. "I won't have it!"

"Hoighty-toighty!" he said. "That's not the way to go into court. You have a choice, of course; but don't speak that way to Judge Fetter."

"No, sir," I said, restraining myself.

"And you must have somebody else in mind to suggest for the appointment."

"You are familiar with the situation, Colonel?" I asked. "You knew my grandfather, and you know how he made his will?"

"Humph! I know all about it," he returned, grimly.

"You are the man to take Lawyer Houns-ditch's place. The co-trustee should be a lawyer, anyway."

"Well, well, I don't know about this," he said, slowly. "You really should have another attorney, then, to appear before Judge Fetter."

"Jest git it put over, Colonel," said Ham, eagerly. "Then we kin settle about the trim-mings afterward."

The colonel laughed and took up his hat.

"All right," he said. "We'll go across to the judge's chambers and see what we can do," and he led the way out of his office.

CHAPTER XXIX

In Which Mr. Chester Downes and I Again "Lock Horns"

This had not been the home-coming I had looked forward to. I had not desired to take up the old fight with my uncle, Mr. Chester Downes. But it seemed as though circumstances were forever opposing us in some wrangle or other!

We three, with the old Colonel leading, went quietly into the room where Judge Fetter held his court. Nobody noticed us and Colonel Playfair motioned Ham and I to seats well back in the room. There were maybe a score of people on the benches. The lawyers and those individuals who were pertinently interested in the matters to be arranged, were allowed inside the rail before the Judge's desk. Colonel Playfair went up there and the justice nodded to him. Nobody knew whom he represented, or in what matter he was interested.

I saw Mr. Chester Downes at once; but my uncle did not see me. He sat with his back to me, in fact, and beside him was a slim and sleek looking man with a green bag before him on the table.

"That's Jim Maxwell," whispered Ham. "And he's the kind of a lawyer that Chester Downes would cotton to, all right. I ain't got no manner o' use for Jim Maxwell. He's one o' them landsharks, he is."

The proceedings droned along for a time. Two matters of probate were settled before our case came up. Then his clerk handed Judge Fetter some papers, he put on his nose glasses, glanced at them, and said:

"In the matter of the appointment of Mr. Chester Downes as co-trustee with Mrs. Mary Webb, Widow—the Darrington Estate. There is a minor child, I believe? You speak in this matter, Mr. Maxwell?"

"I have the honor to do so," said the sleek man.

"There is no objection to the appointment, I understand?" pursued the Judge. "The widow is satisfied?"

"Very much so," declared the lawyer.

"She is not here present?"

"Ill health, your honor," said Maxwell, briskly! "But Mr. Downes, who is her brother-in-law, has been her man of business for years. Mr. Hounsdtich, lately deceased, although appointed under the will, was merely a figure-head in the affairs of the estate."

"And this minor child—how old is he?"

"Seventeen."

"Ah. He has no choice, then? He does not object to his uncle as a trustee?"

"The boy has run away from home, your honor. He is a little wild——" began Mr. Maxwell.

I was so enraged that I could not keep my seat; but Ham pulled me back. "Take it easy, Clint," he whispered.

"In that case," the judge mooned along, rustling the papers, "there being no objection, and Mr. Chester Downes' bond being entirely satisfactory——"

Colonel Playfair arose. The Judge looked at him in surprise.

"I beg pardon, Brother Playfair," he said, politely. "You surely do not appear in this matter?"

"Yes, your honor, I do," said the Colonel.

"You represent anybody interested?"

"I most certainly do," said the Colonel. "I represent the minor child, Clinton Webb."

Mr. Chester Downes leaned forward and whispered to his lawyer. The latter sprang up again.

"I beg Colonel Playfair's pardon," Maxwell said. "Does he state that he has been engaged directly by the boy mentioned to represent him before this court?"

Colonel Playfair was silent for a moment, and the other lawyer went on:

"For if not, I object. No engagement of an attorney by outside parties will stand, your honor. We expected some interference by officious friends of the misguided boy. His mother

is his legal guardian, Mr. Hounsdlitch being dead——”

“Wait,” said the Judge, patiently. “Colonel Playfair knows the law as well as any man here,” and he smiled and bowed. “State your position, sir,” he said to the Colonel.

“I represent the minor, your honor,” he said, quietly. “If it becomes necessary application will be made for the appointment of both a guardian as well as co-trustee of the estate, on behalf of Clinton Webb.”

“But the boy has run away! He is incorrigible,” cried Lawyer Maxwell.

“Brother Maxwell is misinformed,” said the Colonel, suavely, “If he does not know the truth, his client does. Clinton Webb did not run away from home. He was blown out to sea in a little sloop from Bolderhead. It is a matter of record—newspaper record, your honor. He was picked up by a vessel bound for the South Seas. From that distance he has only lately been able to get a ship homeward bound.”

Chester Downes was whispering again to his lawyer. The eyes of the sleek Mr. Maxwell snapped.

“Your honor!” cried he, interrupting Colonel Playfair.

The colonel politely gave way to him. The Judge looked puzzled.

“Your honor! The fact of his having left home in the first place involuntarily is admitted. But he has refused to return. His mother sent

money for his passage to Buenos Ayres. He supposedly wasted the money and remained wilfully out of her jurisdiction."

"Colonel Playfair?" queried the Judge.

"If Brother Maxwell is quite finished," said the colonel, "I would like to state our side of the argument."

"Continue," said the Judge.

"I am sorry to wash dirty linen in court," Colonel Playfair said, quietly. "These family troubles would better be settled outside of the courtroom. But it seems necessary to place the full facts before your honor. It is not only a proven fact that Clinton Webb left home involuntarily; but there was a crime attached to his adventure. He was nailed into the cabin of his boat and the boat was cut adrift at the beginning of the September gale, two years ago this coming fall."

The spectators began to sit up and take notice. The affair was assuming a serious hue.

"The person who committed this dastardly crime is known—known to Brother Maxwell's client. This person, afraid of being arrested for his deed, actually *did* run away from home, went to Buenos Ayres, there represented himself as Clinton Webb and obtained the money sent there by Mrs. Webb for her son, and is now, I understand, a member of the crew of the whaling bark, *Scarboro*, in the South Pacific.

"These final facts are proven by a letter from the American consul at Buenos Ayres, sent to

Mr. Hounsdict, deceased, together with the amount of money which had been given to the false claimant by a clerk in the consul's office. Does Mr. Maxwell wish me to state the name of the person who committed these criminal acts?"

My uncle's lawyer was evidently in a fine flurry. He jumped up to say:

"We let the point pass for the present. But we claim that the minor child, Clinton Webb, has no standing in this court. He is on the high seas——"

"Wrong, Brother Maxwell," said the colonel, very sweetly. "He is here."

I saw Mr. Chester Downes start from his seat. He cried out something, but the Judge rapped his desk for order.

"You say your client is present in court, Colonel?" he asked.

"Clinton Webb! Come forward!" commanded my lawyer, and that time Ham did not try to keep me in my seat.

I marched down the aisle. Mr. Chester Downes saw me coming. His dark face never paled; the blood flooded into it, darkening it until his cheeks and brow were almost black.

We looked at each other. There was no need for either to threaten the other. As of old, we were sworn enemies. And I believed that I had again crossed him in his most precious project.

The colonel let me into the enclosure through the gate.

"You recognize your nephew, do you, Mr. Downes?" asked the Judge.

Chester Downes nodded. He could not speak.

"And I understand that Clinton Webb, here before us, objects to the appointment of his uncle as co-trustee of the estate?" he asked the colonel.

"He does," was the brief reply.

"What is your wish, then, Colonel?" asked Judge Fetter. "This matter, evidently, is not ready for closing today?"

"No, your honor. We ask for a postponement—that is all."

"Do you agree, Brother Maxwell?" asked the judge.

Maxwell looked at his client. There was nothing else to do but to agree and Downes knew it as well as the lawyer.

"Oh, yes!" snarled Chester Downes. "We will have to fight, I see."

He and I had locked horns again; but he would not admit then that he was worsted.

Colonel Playfair had a few moments' whispered conversation with Judge Fetter, and then we went back to the lawyer's office. Chester Downes and Maxwell had hastened away from the courthouse. My uncle did not try to speak to me—and I was glad. I am afraid I could not have controlled myself just then.

There were some papers to sign and more

discussion in Colonel Playfair's office. He called in a brother practitioner, Mr. Charles Ahorn, and the matters were turned over to him. Colonel Playfair agreed to step into poor Mr. Hounsdlitch's shoes, and be my guardian and co-trustee with my mother, if the other side could come to an agreement. I believed, when I had talked with my mother, that she would make no objection.

Crafty as I knew my uncle to be, I could not believe that he had so succeeded in warping my mother's judgment that she would believe everything ill he had said of me. And I counted on her love as a surety.

Much as she might disregard my personal opinion of Chester Downes, I was sure she would welcome me with open arms!

CHAPTER XXX

In Which My Welcome Home Is a Real Welcome, After All

Ham and I went back in the hack to the hotel, where we had dinner with Phillis, Dao Singh standing behind my chair, and waiting at table. I had an idea right then and there that James, the butler, would find his job in danger when we got settled at Darringford House.

Briefly, while we ate, I related some of my adventures to my old friend. Particularly those that had to do with Philly and the Hindoo.

"It beats all—it sure does!" Ham kept repeating, and could scarcely keep his eyes off the turbanned servant.

When we drove through the wide gateway to the grounds surrounding Darringford House, I saw the flutter of a light dress upon the verandah. When we rounded the turn in the drive and the shrubbery was past, I knew my mother was standing there. But I certainly *was* amazed to see Chester Downes sitting in one of the arm chairs. No matter what happened, he never owned up beat! I had to hand it to him there.

But I saw what he was up to immediately. He had hurried ahead to break the news of my coming to my mother, and to lay plans for his continued influence in the house. My mother and the estate were practically his bread and butter. I knew that well enough.

But nothing then could spoil the joy of my home-coming. I tore open the door of the hack before it stopped and leaped out. Mother rushed into my arms as I came up the step and I swung her up off the ground—she was such a little, dainty woman!—and I knew that she had never ceased to love me.

“Clint! Clint!” she sobbed. “My dear, dear boy!”

“Hug me again, mother!” I returned, trying to laugh, but making a poor mess of it. “This is the happiest minute I’ve seen for two years.”

“And how you’ve grown!” she gasped, pushing me off a bit so that she could look me over better.

“And you haven’t grown a bit!” I laughed, and swung her again until she was breathless.

“And I hope you have got enough of the awful sea and sea-going!” she cried. “Oh, Clint! You will stay at home now?”

“I certainly hope to,” I returned, casting a meaning glance at Chester Downes, who had risen, with a false smile on his face, and his hand outstretched.

But in spite of the fact that at that moment I meant all that I said, and had not the remotest

idea that I should ever go to sea again, circumstances not then dreamed of changed my intentions later; and the reader who so desires may follow my further course afloat in the fourth volume of this series, entitled: "The Ocean Express; or, Clint Webb Aboard the Sea Tramp."

Then my mother caught sight of Philly and Dao Singh. They had stepped out of the hack and the tall Hindoo, in his oriental costume, stood gravely behind the little golden haired beauty. She looked like a story out of some Eastern Fairy Tale, and Dao Singh just set her off nicely.

"The pretty child!" mother murmured, clasping her hands, and I know that at that instant her heart went out to Phillis Duane.

Philly was looking up at her with a bashful little smile; yet the golden lights in her brown eyes were dancing. She had laughed to see how I had caught my little mother up off the ground.

"Who is she, Clinton?" mother asked.

"My sister," I told her, proudly.

"What?" gasped mother, and I saw Chester Downes echo the word, but in a whisper. I could imagine the start my announcement gave him. And yet, my statement could not explain all that I saw in my uncle's face as he glared at little Phillis. It was not until afterward, however, that I remembered how startled Chester Downes was.

"That's what we've agreed to, mother," I said, smiling, too, at my pretty little friend. "We have adopted each other. Now it remains with you to take Phillis Duane right into your heart along with me."

"The dear, dear child!" mother murmured, and went down the verandah steps to meet the girl.

"I know I shall love you, dearly! dearly!" cried Philly, and put her arms around mother's neck as the latter stooped over her.

Dao Singh made a low obeisance. Mother looked rather startled at him and then turned to me.

"Dao Singh," I explained, "has had much care of Phillis since she was little. He insists upon attending upon her——"

"And upon the Webb Sahib," concluded the Hindoo, gravely. "It is well that the little Memsahib and Webb Sahib, come in health to Her Ladyship, on whom be peace and health. Dao Singh is her servant."

He bent low again, took up the hem of my mother's voluminous summer dress, and pressed it to his forehead. Mother looked amazed, and well she might—a new daughter and such a kingly serving person thrust upon her so unexpectedly. I had to laugh.

"Your Ladyship will get used to it in time. As a man before the mast in an old windjammer, being served by an oriental prince has its drawbacks; but you'll get used to it, Little Mum!"

But mother's interest was soon fixed entirely upon Phillis, and with her hand upon the child's shoulder, she urged her up the steps. There Chester Downes was hanging about, eager to be noticed, anxious to come into the picture.

"Your Uncle Chester, Clinton," said mother, "has been so kind to me while you were away."

I said nothing. She glanced from my face to his, and then back again, and her lips began to tremble.

"Oh! I hoped that you would meet him differently now, Clinton," she said.

"I am sorry if I consider Mr. Downes just what he was before I went away. Any house would be uncomfortable if both of us remained in it. Can I speak plainer?"

"You don't need to, boy!" snarled Mr. Downes, his face reddening again.

"Colonel Playfair will probably see you at any time you wish to call on him—either he or Mr. Charles Aborn," I said, pointedly. "They have my affairs in charge."

Mother did not hear. She was talking with Phillis. And Mr. Downes, after a brief hesitation, went down the steps and through the shrubbery to the street.

I took the chair upon the other side of Philly and Dao Singh, like a gaily painted life-size statue, stood at a respectable distance. Briefly we told mother the story of the little girl's adventures; and as I well knew mother received the waif with joy.

"It has been a great sorrow all his life, my child," mother said, drawing Philly upon her lap, "that Clint had no sister. A boy is a great comfort to a widowed woman; but he cannot take the place of a daughter. Love me, my child, if you can."

And I knew by the way that the child threw her arms about mother's neck and sobbed upon her breast, that she had already begun to love my mother. Philly's heart had been sore for just the sort of protective care my mother could give her. I saw that my scheme was going to be a huge success!

With Chester Downes out of the way my home-coming was all that I could have hoped for. The help around the house welcomed me with delight, too. Even my mother's French maid, Marie Portent, gave me a wintry smile—and I had never been a favorite with her.

The neighbors came in to see me, too, for the news had spread all over town that I had come back from my wanderings. Mr. Chester Downes had not succeeded in turning everybody against me.

But you may believe I got into some decent clothes before I held any reception. Then I went down town and wired Thankful Polk a hundred dollars and the news that everything was O. K. with me.

"Now we will go to Bolderhead and open the house for the rest of the summer," mother

said that very evening. I could not bear to open it without you, dear boy."

We kept off the subject of the Downes just then; but I might as well state right here that Mr. Chester Downes was not appointed by the court co-trustee with my mother. Colonel Playfair *was*, and that before we closed Daringford house and went to live in mother's summer villa on Bolderhead Neck.

Thankful Polk came north to visit us, too; and mother was greatly pleased with him. Dao Singh, as I foresaw, soon made it advisable for us to find another situation for James, our butler. Singh actually, when we got to Bolderhead, took the entire responsibility of the housekeeping upon himself, and mother thankfully declared that she had never had so easy a time before, nor had the household been run so smoothly.

For the first time since I could remember Mr. Chester Downes did not go to Bolderhead with us. I had no friction over it, and mother was not troubled. Colonel Playfair knew how to bring things about. I liked him a whole lot better for a guardian than I had Mr. Houns-ditch.

As for my cousin Paul, when he returned home—if he ever did—I knew I had a method of keeping him at a distance. The threat of punishment for what he had done to me still hung over him like a sword of Damocles.

It was not many weeks before I had a letter

from Mr. Jim Barney. Among other interesting items of news, he stated that both he and his brother had been exonerated together with Captain Bowditch in the matter of the collision and the sinking of the Seamew. If blame lay anywhere it was upon poor Captain Somes, who had gone down with his ship.

As to the Barney brothers' private affairs, they had both refused their uncle's offer of money and position. As long as the old man would not divide his wealth between them and give both of them an opportunity of entering the shipping firm, Jim and Alf had resigned and were going to sail upon ships belonging to other owners. That seemed to them to be the best and final settlement of the matter.

I often thought of my long cruise in the Windjammer, and I could not say that I was sorry for having gone through those adventures. I certainly was not sorry that they had brought about the coming of Phillis Duane to our house. For, as the weeks flew by, the British consul heard nothing regarding the girl's friends or relatives.

It looked as though she was ours "for keeps," as Thank said; and both my mother and I were satisfied.

THE END.

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